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During the half century of historical silence from 1844 forward, and pending the progress of the desultory researches, the Seri suffered a succession of external shocks more serious in their internal effects than any of those of the three centuries preceding; indeed it is just to say that during this half century the Seri range was curtailed, the Seri customs were modified, and the Seri population was diminished more effectively than during the preceding sesquicentury of fairly definite record. The chief factor in this transformation was an intrepid pioneer, who pushed actual settlement toward the Seri frontier more vigorously than any predecessor—Señor Pascual Encinas, a son of Sonora.[1]

Born near Hermosillo in 1819, Don Pascual was in early maturity at the time of Colonel Andrade's expedition, and was fully conversant with the later history of the Seri. Of adventurous disposition, and holding interests in Bacuachito, he was familiar with the Seri frontier; and in hunting deer and other large game over the vast delta plain of Rio Sonora he had perceived the agricultural possibilities of the region. During the struggle of 1844 he became impressed with the idea that the Seri might be controlled and gradually inducted into useful citizenship through a judicious combination of industrial, educational, and evangelical agencies; and before the end of the year he began the establishment of a rancho (the present Rancho San Francisco de Costa Rica) on the Seri borderland, with the double object of developing new resources and regulating the relations between tribesmen and settlers. Enlisting the aid of a corps of vaqueros, mechanics, and farmers, he excavated a deep well, erected corrals and adobe houses, cleared away the exceptionally luxuriant mesquite forests, fenced fields, and stocked the plains with horses, burros, and cattle. At the same time he sought Seri wanderers and treated them with such kindness and firmness as to gain their confidence; and while most of the tribe held aloof, some attached themselves to the rancho, and a few even were taught to labor, albeit in desultory fashion. In this stage, as for some years afterward, he was materially aided by his contemporary, Kolusio, then in his physical prime and still in good repute among his kinsmen. Meantime he obtained the assignment of two priests, who made it their chief duty still further to placate the tribesmen and their families and to induct them into religious observances and belief; and as the confidence of the Indians increased, he had two boys domiciled in the rancho and educated in the Spanish as well as in the faith, in the hope that they might pass into priesthood and so form a future bond with their kin. One of these neophytes disappeared in the troublous times of a later decade, though tradition indicates that he became a tribal outcast (like Kolusio still later) and slunk away to Pitiquito and Altar, and afterward to California; the other, christened Juan Estorga and

[1] The following paragraphs are condensed from oral recitals by Señor Encinas (a notably straightforward and judicious authority), supplemented and corroborated in all essential details by Señores Andres Noriega, Ygnacio Lozanio, and several other habitués of the Seri borderland, as well as by Kolusio and Mashém, several Papago informants, and various collateral documents.

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nicknamed El Gran Pelado ("The Great Shorn"), survives as unbelief Mashém, long since relapsed into his native savagery, save that he remembers the Spanish, affects a hat, cuts his hair to the neck (whence his nickname), and prefers footgear to the fashion of his fellows.

Industrially, Don Pascual's venture proved successful; the fertile soil, periodically watered from below by the underflow of the semi-annual freshets, yielded incredible crops; reveling in the exceptional floral wealth of the delta and tided over bad seasons by the artificial forage, the stock increased and multiplied beyond precedent; and so the rancho became a flourishing establishment, housing a score or more of families and harboring a hundred or two dependents, in addition to the thousands of half-wild horses and cattle. Meantime, the industrial lines ramifying from the rancho formed a drag net for Seri raiders, practically cutting off forays eastward toward Hermosillo and Horcasitas, and greatly reducing the sallies southeastward toward Guaymas and northeastward toward Bacuachito and Caborca; and Don Pascual began to receive recognition and state and federal concessions as a public benefactor. For a decade the industrial and evangelical influence and the effect of the bold kindness of El Patron extended and became felt throughout the tribe, and most of the families visited the rancho at least occasionally. Yet even the best of them remained averse to labor save in sporadic sports, and indifferent to the religious teaching, save when sweetened by substantial largess; while all but the decrepit and the two carefully restrained neophytes came and went capriciously, and were much given to decamping incontinently by night to return shamefacedly one by one in the course of a week or two, without consistent or adequate excuse for their stampede—indeed the vaqueros habitually classed these nocturnal flights of the Seri and the reasonless stampedes of their stock in the same category. Ostensibly a few of the larger boys and girls and a still smaller number of the adults were helpers about the rancho; actually they were scavengers, consuming the waste of the shambles and the earth-mixed scatterings from the thrashing floors, and saving the rancheros the noisome duty of removing the carcasses of animals dead by disease or accident; and as their indolence increased under the easy régime, they grew into more and more open thievery. By no means deficient in shrewdness and cunning, they adopted numberless devices for imposing on the credulity of the majordomo and other officials of the rancho. When coin-like tokens of stamped copper were used in the transactions of the rancho as equivalents of labor, the Seri ingeniously obtained sheet copper by stealth or barter, systematically counterfeited the tokens, and exchanged them for supplies at the rancho store; it was a favorite trick to surreptitiously break the neck or a leg of a horse, cow, or burro, and report finding the dead or crippled animal, at the same time begging for the carcass; and, whenever opportunity offered, they slyly slaughtered a head of stock, consumed it to the hoofs and horns

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and larger bones, sucked up the blood stains, and buried the few remains in cactus thickets, impenetrable save by their own hardy limbs and bodies. Nor did any of the tribe except the two restrained neophytes ever really enter the collective life of the patriarchal group headed by Don Pascual; they attended no industrial or social or churchly function save in response to reminder and solicitation; they craved the white man's medicines in slight disorders, but rejected them in extremis; and the dying or dead were spirited away to be inhumed and mourned, according to their wont, in their harsh but beloved motherland.

During this period of mutual toleration the Seri were so deeply influenced by the white contact that, for probably the only time in their history, they voluntarily allowed an alien free entry into their territory; and Don Pascual explored the coast of Bahia Kino, projected a port, and even visited Isla Tiburon twice or thrice. In one of these visits he was ferried over Boca Infierno on a balsa, but, finding himself unable to keep pace with the swift-footed Seri on their hilly pathways, he returned for his saddle mule; halfway across, the poor animal swimming behind the balsa suddenly plunged and struggled, and, on landing, hobbled out on three legs—the fourth having being snapped by a shark. Warned by this incident, Don Pascual abandoned a half-formed plan of stocking the island, and afterward brought up a small vessel from Guaymas in which he carried across a dozen caballeros (including Don Ygnacio Lozania, who had visited the island with the Andrade expedition); and this party examined the southeastern quarter of the island, watering two or three times at Tinaja Anita, and pushing as far westward as Arroyo Carrizal. On this trip he studied the Seri house-building, and was the first to note the large use of turtle-shells and sponges in the process.[1]

About the middle fifties it became apparent that the Seri were dividing into a parasitical portion clustered about the rancho (as their forbears gathered about Populo and Pueblo Seri long before), and a more independent faction clinging to their rugged ranges and gale-swept fishing grounds; and it became evident, too, that the thievery of the dependent faction would soon ruin the rancho if not checked, or at least greatly diminished. Accordingly the passive policy was modified by introducing a more active police service. At first the penalties for theft and misdemeanors were light, and the system promised well—especially as even a slight punishment was equivalent to banishment, the criminal fleeing to Tiburon on his escape or immediately after the crime; yet the experience of a year or two proved that the escaped parasites seldom resumed the hard customs of their tribal life, but generally returned to the borderland and there preyed on the wandering stock from the rancho. Finally, driven to extremity, and supported

[1] Typical Seri jacales, as described by Don Pascual in 1856, were observed on Tiburon by the 1895 expedition, as shown by the photographs reproduced in plates VII, VIII, and IX.

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by the state and federal authorities (themselves confessedly unable successfully to cope with the condition), Don Pascual reluctantly adopted a severer régime. Sending out as messengers several Seri still remaining at the rancho, he convened the leading chiefs and clanmothers of the tribe in a council, and announced that the stock-killing must cease, on pain of a Seri head for each head of stock thereafter slain. The Indians seemingly acquiesced, and separated; but within two days a group of Seri women "milled" a band of horses, caught and threw one in such wise as to break its neck, and immediately sucked its blood, gorged its intestines, and buried its quarters to "ripen", after their former fashion. Thereupon a matron remaining near the rancho was sent to demand the delivery of the perpetrators; and, when she failed to return, the vaqueros were instructed to shoot the first Seri seen on the llano. Within two days more, the tribe were on the warpath for revenge—and the war raged for a decade.

During the early months of the Encinas war Don Pascual's vaqueros sought merely to enforce the barbaric law of a head for a head; but, as they found themselves beset by ambush, assailed and wounded by night, despoiled of favorite animals, and kept constantly in that most nerve-trying state of eternal vigilance, their rancor rose to an intensity nearly equal to the savage passion for blood-vengeance; and thenceforth the Seri were hunted from the plain east of Desierto Encinas precisely as were the stealthy jaguar and sneaking coyote—and the ghastly details were better spared. There were few open battles; commonly the vaqueros rode in groups and guarded against ambuscades, and the Seri were picked off one by one; but once in the early sixties Don Pascual, at the head of some 30 vaqueros, fell into an ambush on the frontier, and several of his horses were killed and some of his men wounded, while 60 or 70 Seri warriors were left on the field. Don Pascual's horse received a slight arrow wound, to which little attention was paid; next morning the gash was swollen and inflamed and the beast too stiff and logy for use; in the afternoon the glands under the jaw were swollen, and there was a purulent discharge from eyes and nostrils. On the second morning the animal was hardly able to move, its head was enormously swollen, there were fetid ulcers about the jaws and throat, and the swelling extended to the legs and abdomen. On the third morning there were suppurating ulcers on various parts of the body, while rags of putrefied flesh and stringy pus hung from the head and neck, and the animal was unapproachable because of the stench; during the day it dropped dead, and even the coyotes and buzzards shrank from the pestilential carcass. This and parallel incidents impressed Don Pascual with the dangers incident to Seri war; but fortunately the fact that he—the leader of the party, the first to fall into the ambush, and the target of most of the arrows—had escaped unscathed impressed still more deeply the surviving savages, and they soon sued for peace. Thenceforth he was revered as a shaman greater than those of the tribe, feared as an invulnerable fighter, and honored as a just lawgiver; and

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gradually the condition of mutual tolerance was restored, to rest on a firmer basis than before. 175 648

Don Pascual estimates that during the dozen years of strife between his men and the Seri forces about half of the tribe were slain. The horror of the history of this period may be passed over; it may merely be noted as a casual fact that one of the two Mexicans accompanying the 1895 expedition was credited with 17 Seri heads. When he pointed out the site of his last exploit, a mile or two south of Rancho Libertad, and some incredulity was expressed, he immediately galloped to the spot and brought back a silent witness in the form of a bleached Seri skull.[1]

At the close of the war Don Pascual continued the industrial development of the plains lying east of the desert border of Seriland, received new concessions in recognition of his conquest, and developed the ranches of Santa Ana and Libertad; but the evangelical arm of his vigorous mission gradually withered. For a dozen years the Seri looked up to "El Patron" as a quasi ruler, whose approval was requisite for the ratification of chieftainship, and through him ran a slender thread of nominal fealty to the state and the republic; yet few parasites gathered about the rancho. Mashém had gone back to his clan; and when depredations were committed at Bacuachito or elsewhere and the criminals were caught, usually through Don Pascual's instrumentality, they were sometimes haled to Hermosillo for trial, and Kolusio was kept there as the official interpreter of charges and evidence and findings. Sometime during the sixties a few Seri youths were enamored to Pueblo Seri for education, but when they were instructed to cut their hair they slunk dejectedly to their temporary domicile, only to decamp during the ensuing night; again, in 1870, Kolusio was commissioned to bring in a few young people and a matron or two of the tribe, and succeeded in doing so just in time to encounter an epidemic of measles, from which some died, while the others shook the dust of the pueblo from their feet forever; and this last straw, added to his alien residence and his presence at the dreaded trials, broke down the tribal toleration of Kolusio and made him an outlaw forever. [115] [115]

In the later seventies Don Pascual's energies began to wane, while the Seri population was waxing again; and, although the Encinas frontier was protected, raids began to recur toward Bacuachito, on the ranches southwest of Cáborca, and sometimes toward Guaymas; and the hostilities then engendered have never terminated. In the eighties Don Pascual suffered from cataract, gradually losing his sight, and his rule relaxed still further; Rancho Libertad was abandoned, and a condition of armed neutrality supervened at San Francisco de Costa Rica and Santa Ana; and this condition still persists, save as occasionally modified by a crude sort of diplomacy on the part of the Seri: when blood-feud is not burning (and it is usually extinguished by the killing of an alien on the coast or some remote part of the frontier), and when no stock have 648

[1] The specimen described by Dr Hrdlička, postea, p. 143.

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been slaughtered for some months, an aged woman may be seen skulking about the mesquite clumps in sight of the rancho; if her presence is tolerated for a day or two, she approaches to beg for water and food and to receive the cast-off rags hastily forced on her nakedness by the sensitive señorita; if she deem her welcome not too chill, she erects a jacal a few hundred yards away, and there she is usually found, a morning or two later, to be accompanied by a younger matron with a child or two; and if these are tolerated, the rancheria may grow to half a dozen jacales and half a hundred persons.[1] The band may remain a fortnight or even a month; but in case of serious illness of any of their number, or of threat or punishment for petty peculiarities, or of an unusual storm, or of a brilliant meteor, or of any exceptional occurrence about the rancho, the rancheria is commonly found empty next morning. If the attaches of the rancho are indisposed to tolerate the first envoy, yet feel kindly rather than rancorous, she is merely dogged and stoned away like a depredating domestic animal from another hacienda; if the rancor of past encounters remains, the mercy accorded her is precisely that shown the predatory coyote or other feral animal from the fastnesses of the sierras—and the tribe take warning and doubtless rejoice that their loss is no greater.

Any recital of the common history of the peculiarly savage Seri and the whites necessarily conveys an exaggerated notion of intimacy and mutual influence, since it emphasizes the few positive interrelations scattered along the decades of neglected nonrelation; and this is true of the Encinas régime as of earlier centuries. The great fact is that throughout their recorded history the Seri have touched civilization so slightly and so seldom that the effect of each contact was largely lost before the next supervened; and the unprecedentedly intimate contact of the Encinas régime, especially during the initial period of abnormal toleration, serves less to indicate relationship in characteristics and sympathies than to measure the breadth of the chasm between the Seri and the Mexican—a chasm not exceeded, and probably not equaled, elsewhere in America. About the middle fifties, probably every Seri above infancy and below decrepitude had seen Don Pascual and some other habitués of the rancho; they yielded to the seductions of indolent scavengering apparently more numerously than ever before; they substituted cast-off rags and barter-bought manta (plain cotton cloth) for the products of their own primitive weaving; they ate cooked food when it fell in their way; they half-heartedly adopted metal cutting implements, and sought or stole nails and hoop-iron for arrowpoints; some of them acquired a smattering of Spanish, and many of them solicited and sported Spanish names, just as they begged and flaunted tawdry handkerchiefs and beads; and they generally enjoyed mildly the ecclesiastical fiestas, and took kindly to the cross as a symbol of peace and plenty and perhaps of deeper import. Yet

[1] Typical single jacal and the native manhood gathered at Costa Rico in 1895 are shown from photographs in plates v and xx.

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even during this halcyon term no Seri save Kolusio and the Altar outlaw ever learned to live in a house; none but these and Mashém were huts habitually; and, despite the fact that they often witnessed and sometimes playfully or perforce participated in the processes, no Seri ever really encompassed the idea of house-building or even of making adobe. Though surrounded by horses when near the rancho, they never learned to ride nor to use the animals otherwise than for immediate slaughter and consumption; though in frequent sight of skilful ropers, they never fully grasped the idea of the riata, preferring to seize their prey with hands and teeth; though familiar with the agricultural operations of the rancho, they never turned a sod nor planted a seed on their own account; though in frequent sight of cooking, they seldom began and never finished the process with their own food; though acquainted with firearms, they continued to regard them as thaumaturgic devices, and chose the bow and arrow for actual use; though submitting to apparel on the frontier, they commonly cast away the incumbrances on returning to their lairs; and no Mexican or other Caucasian ever saw within their esoteric life—their names remained unrevealed, their hair remained sacred, their mourning for the dead was unheard save at a distance, and no alien, even unto today, has ever seen the birth of their babes, the christening of their children, the burial of their dead, or the ceremonies of their shrines. The Seri and the whites were, indeed, mutually tolerant; but, so far as concerns mutual sympathy, the toleration was almost precisely on a par with that between the ranchero and the vulture-flock that scavengers his corrals—and when depredation began the toleration was of a piece with that between householders and their unwillingly domiciled rodents. It is not too much to say that the interracial mistrust and hatred of the Western Hemisphere culminates on the borders of Seriland; though the antipathy is commonly regarded by the alien tribesmen and the Mexicans as other than racial, since the Seri are felt to be hardly human—a feeling fully shared by the Seri, who undoubtedly deem themselves more closely akin to their deified bestial tutelaries than to the hated humans haunting their borders.

Even during the Encinas régime the Seri came in occasional contact with aliens on other parts of the frontier: on Hacienda Seris, the somewhat remoter borderland outpost on the north, the relations between the landholders and the Seri were analogous to those on the Encinas plains, though less acute in the ratio of relative distance. Occasionally small parties of warriors journeyed to Guaymas[1] on balsas or on foot to barter pelican-skin robes for Caucasian commodities, chiefly aguardiente and manta; still more rarely similar pilgrimages were made to the outskirts of Hermosillo; a few marauding raids were made to the ranchos lying near Cieneguilla and Caborca; and a num-

[1] The accompanying plate XII is reproduced from a photograph of a small group of Seri traders taken near Guaymas probably during the eighties. It was kindly furnished by F. A. Ober, who purchased it in Guaymas.

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ber of ill-advised prospecting parties, coming by land or water, paid the penalty of foolhardiness. Writing about 1864, Historian Velasco resorted to the Seri to say:

This handful of bandits, assassins, thieves, brutes [bribones], infinitely vile and cowardly, on February 23 last, on the Guaymas road, at the place called Huerfano, assassinated 4 unhappy women, including a girl of 9 years, and 7 men who were conducting them in a cart toward that port.

He bitterly denounced the apparent apathy of the state and federal authorities, adding:

When it is read in history fifty years hence that a handful of murderous Seris, certainly not more than 80 of the tribe able to bear arms, was able to dominate in the midst of their crimes with unexampled audacity on account of the debility of the government and the inhabitants, it will be regarded as a romance or a fable; for it seems impossible that in the nineteenth century such a condition of things as did exist to degrade the reason, the morality, and the dignity of civilized man.

Yet a final note, apparently added in press, recorded that—

In consequence of the last incident of the Seris, the prefect of Guaymas, Don Cayetano Navarro, took the field, returning with 12 women and 16 children prisoners; also 2 striplings and a vieillard. He slew 9 among those who had no leader. This was on Isla Tiburon. The Indians fled thence, and are supposed to be at Tepoca.[1]

These may be considered as characteristic skirmishes attending the Encinas war. Other episodes followed, including the outbreaks of 1879, noted in part by M Pinart. Bacuachito suffered in various locally important events that will never be written: when Don Jesus Omada, a water guide to the expedition of 1895, was asked about the Seri at Bacuachito, he answered with cumulative vehemence, "They killed my father. They killed my brother! They killed my brother's wife!! They have killed half my friends!!!" As he spoke he was feverishly baring his breast; displaying a frightful scar over the clavicle, he exclaimed, "There struck a Seri arrow"; then he stripped his arm with a single sweep to reveal a ragged cicatrix extending nearly from shoulder to wrist, and added in a tone tremulous with pent bitterness, "The Seri have teeth!"

In the course of the half century from 1844 onward, the population of Sonora increased materially, and carried more than a proportionate increase in the development of agricultural and mineral resources; and, especially under the beneficent Diaz régime, the state passed from the condition of a remote frontier province into that of a well-governed commonwealth. Naturally this progress carried the Caucasian element, including that of blended blood, farther and farther away from the nonprogressive Seri; and thereby the horror and detestation awakened by the very utterance of the name of the lowly tribe were intensified beyond description or ready understanding. The traditions of arrow poisoning were kept alive, and, doubtless, growing; the recitals of carrion eating were repeated, and possibly—just possibly—magnified beyond the reality; the accounts of offense and defense by nails and

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[1] Boletin de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografia y Estadistica, tome 11, 1862, pp. 118-125.

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forth (such as that of Jesus Umada) passed from mouth to mouth until—incredible as it may seem—the more timid Sonorenses stood in greater dread of these natural weapons of the Seri than of their brutal clubs and swift-thrown missiles, or even of their poisoned arrows; while traditions of cannibalism came up and received such general credence that the current items of Seri outrages, both in local gossip and in the Mexican and American press, customarily recounted savage butcheries ending with gruesome feastings on the raw or slightly cooked flesh of the victims. The shuddering antipathy felt for the perpetrators of these inhumanities even a thousand miles away increased toward their frontier, as light toward its source; the dread was deepened by the failure of punitive expeditions sent out again and again only to be balked by waterless sand-wastes or wrecking tidebips; and in 1894 and 1895, at least, the horror of the Seri was a daily and nightly incubus on half the citizens of Hermosillo and the tributary pueblos and ranchos, and a thorn in the flesh of the state officials.

The external history of the Seri since the spring of 1894 is fairly known, both through the direct researches and through press reports, and would seem to be typical. This era may be assumed to open with the arrival on Tiburon's shores of the sloop *Examiner*, carrying two San Francisco newspaper writers, Holdnam and Logan, with two assistants, Clark and Cowell. The to-have-been-expected happened duly, save that two of the party escaped, and on reaching Guaymas advertised the disaster through correspondence and the press. Several of the accounts indicated that the two victims were not only slain but eaten, and various plans were laid in California, Arizona, and Sonora for the recovery of the bones[1]—as if, forsooth, the omnivorous and strong-toothed Seri spared anything save scattered teeth and split sections of the longer shafts of skeletons the size of those of *Homo sapiens*. While in Guaymas the two survivors set up claims for indemnity, which initiated international correspondence and inquiry into the details of the affair. These details are indicated, in sufficient fulness for present purposes, in a formal communication incorporated in the international correspondence, viz:

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,
Washington, December 14, 1894.

SIR: Early in November I visited the Seri tribe of Indians, inhabiting Tiburon island in the Gulf of California and an area of several thousand square miles of the adjacent mainland in Sonora, Mexico. The visit was for the purpose of making collections under your authority as Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; but I availed myself of the opportunity for obtaining additional information relating to the customs, habits, and history of the tribe. In addition to my own party I was accompanied by Señor Pascual Encinas, a prominent citizen of Hermosillo, and

[1] A number of Californians and Arizonians, especially M. M. Rice, of Phoenix, intimated a strong desire to join the 1895 expedition of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the express purpose of personally ascertaining the fate and seeking the remains of Holdnam, who was extensively known in southern California and southwestern Arizona.

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648 owner of several ranches adjacent to, and one within, the territory claimed by the
[115] Seri Indians; also by Señor A. Alvemar-Leon of Hermosillo, a young Mexican gentleman educated in the United States. For Señor Encinas the Seri Indians have the highest regard, and his kindly motive in accompanying the party was to facilitate friendly intercourse with the Indians; Señor Alvemar-Leon acted as Spanish-English interpreter, and one of the tribe who speaks Spanish [Moshém] acted as the Seri interpreter.

One of the subjects of inquiry of the Indians related to the alleged killing of two Americans by the Seri Indians on Tiburon island during last spring at a date not definitely known either to the Indians or to myself. At first the Indians were indisposed to convey information on the subject, but after receiving presents from
[123] Señor Encinas and myself, and friendly assurances from the former, the interpreter for the tribe confessed the crime and detailed the circumstances, denying, however, that any of the Indians present at the place of conference (Rancho de San Francisco de Costa Rica, 17 leagues west-southwest of Hermosillo and near the coast) participated.

According to the first account given through the Indian interpreter, the Indians on the island saw a small vessel approach the shores of the island, and saw four men land therefrom in a small boat. The spokesman among the strangers made inquiry, chiefly by signs, as to whether game was abundant in the interior of the island, and was by signs answered in the affirmative by the chief of the tribe, who displayed a letter of authority from the state officials at Hermosillo. Then the strangers divided, two remaining on the shore by the small boat, while the spokesman and another, accompanied by several Indians, started toward the interior of the island. When they were some distance away—the account continues—some of the Indians remaining on shore indicated by signs a desire to borrow the rifle of one of the two men on the beach, and after some parley the rifle was turned over to them; then the Indians desired also to borrow the small boat in which the party of white men had landed, and after one of the two men remaining on the shore was put aboard the vessel, this, too, was placed in the hands of the Indians. Thereupon several of the Indians entered the small boat, carrying the white man's rifle, and rowed around a headland a short distance away. Passing this point they landed and a part of them ran quickly into the interior in such direction as to intercept the course of the white men. There they lay in wait until the strangers appeared, when they shot the spokesman, killing him almost instantly. On this the second white man cried out for help, whereupon he too was shot and wounded, and then (according to the first account) ran away and concealed himself in the bushes and was seen no more. The Indians who had borrowed the boat then went back to the shore, and reentered the boat with the intention of returning and capturing the fine vessel of the strangers; but as they approached the vessel, being at the time quite near the shore, the man on board arose suddenly with a gun pointed toward them and shouted, whereupon they dropped the borrowed gun and, leaping from the boat, ran away among the mesquite bushes, all escaping unhurt. The white man on the beach then, as the account ran, leaped into the boat, and, recovering his gun, rowed to the vessel and got aboard, when the two men at once made sail and escaped down the bay.

124 The foregoing account was given to Señor Encinas alone by the Indians through
648 their interpreter, and was afterward conveyed to me through Señor Alvemar-Leon. Both of us recognized the incongruity with the character of the Seri Indians of that part of the narrative relating to the wounding and escape of the second man, and Señors Encinas and Leon and myself sought to impress the improbability of the account on the interpreter. Subsequently the Indians, through their interpreter, conveyed to Señor Encinas a modification of the account (after adhering to the first version for twenty-four hours), which agreed in all essential respects with the first, excepting the supplementary statement that some of the Indians (but neither the party who accompanied the white men nor those who followed in the boat) ran after the wounded man, caught him, shot him again—whereupon he again cried out—and

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them killed him with stones. This modified account, also, Señor Encinas duly conveyed to me. 124

Still later, in collecting linguistic material through the Seri interpreter with the assistance of Señor Alvomar-Leon, I recurred to the subject incidentally (or at least ostensibly so) on two or three occasions, partly with the view of verifying or disproving the current report that the men were eaten by the Indians; and since the first distrust on the part of the interpreter and the companions (by whom he was commonly surrounded) had worn off, the questions were answered freely and with apparent truth. In brief, the information gained in this way was a repetition in general terms of the statement of the killing of both men; but the responses indicated (1) that the Indians are not cannibals, (2) that they do not eat any portion or portions of the body of an enemy slain in war, (3) that they do not eat human flesh in a sacrificial way, and (4), specifically, that they did not eat the flesh of the two white men killed last spring. I am disposed to give credence to all of these statements. 648 [266]

Señor Encinas informed me that for a long time after the reputed killing of the two Americans on the island the Seri were exceptionally shy and were seldom seen on the mainland; that the first representatives of the tribe to appear were one or two old women who came to his rancho with much trepidation; that these representatives being not ill-treated, a man appeared, who was also well treated, and that still later other members of the tribe appeared, though it was only a few days before our visit that any considerable body of the Seri Indians showed themselves at their favorite mainland haunt on his rancho. It was his first communication with the Indians since the killing, and, both he and they agreed, the first confession of the crime outside of their own tribe. 648

While in Sonora various conflicting accounts of the affair were given me. One, to which I was disposed to attach credence by reason of the character of my informant and his explanation of the circumstances under which the information was gained, 115 124 was given me (just before the visit referred to above) by ex-Consul Furber, of Guaymas. This account corresponds in all essential details with that conveyed to my party by the Indians, except that, according to Mr Furber' account, the survivors were altogether unarmed after the borrowing of the rifle by the Indians, and that when the man in the boat arose suddenly and shouted he pointed at the Indians not a gun but a stick, in the hope of deceiving them thereby, as he was fortunate enough to do. 648

It may be added that the Seri Indians are at the same time the most primitive and the most bloodthirsty and treacherous of the Indians of North America, so far as my knowledge extends; also that their character is well known throughout Sonora, and indeed generally throughout Mexico, Arizona, and the southern part of California. I was assured by the acting governor of Sonora and by the prefect of Hermosillo that it would be little short of suicide for even a Mexican official to visit these Indians or land on their island without an armed guard. Through conference with the Indians, also, I learned that any white man, Mexican, or Indian of another tribe coming in contact with them is killed without the slightest compunction, unless they are restrained by fear. Accordingly I am satisfied that the character of the Seri Indians is quite as bad as the unsavory reputation they have acquired throughout the Southwest. 181 648

It should be observed that while the Indians were unable to give the names of the men killed, their description of men and vessel agreed exactly with those of the newspaper correspondent Robinson and his companion, and with the sloop *Kranzer*; and Mr Furber' information was obtained direct from the survivors of the expedition of which Mr Robinson had charge. There can thus be no doubt that it was Mr Robinson and his companion who were killed by these Indians, and whose killing was confessed by them, as set forth above. 124 648

With great respect, your obedient servant,

W J McGee,
Ethnologist in charge.

Honorable S. P. Langley,
Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

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On first learning of the incident, months before the diplomatic correspondence began, the state and federal authorities promptly adopted vigorous punitive measures. A vessel carrying a force of federal troops was dispatched from Guaymas and a body of state troops were sent from Hermosillo with instructions to meet on the coast and capture the criminals at any cost, even to the extermination of the tribe if resistance was offered. But like so many others, the expedition failed; the horses of the land party were stalled in the sands and burrow-riddled plains, the vessel was harassed by storms and tidal currents, and the landing boats were swamped by the surf, while the Indians merely fled at sight of the invaders toward inaccessible lairs or remote parts of their territory; and when the water was gone and men and animals were at point of famishing, the forces retired without so much as seeing a single Seri.

During the ensuing autumn the tribe, having quenched their blood-feud in alien blood, turned toward peace, and sent a matron of the Turtle clan, known as Juana Maria, to Costa Rica—i. e., Rancho de San Francisco de Costa Rica—where she was gradually followed by younger matrons and children, then by youths, and finally by warriors (after the fashion of Seri diplomacy) to the aggregate number of about sixty. Here they were found by the first expedition of the Bureau of American Ethnology, in November, 1894; and here, under the still strong influence of the venerable Don Pascual, supplemented by small gifts and persistent pressure, they gradually "gave their language", submitted to extensive photographing, confessed specifically to the Robinson killing, and yielded up nearly the whole of their portable possessions in the way of domestic implements and utensils, face-painting material, pelican-skin robes, snake-skin necklaces, etc.

With the return of the Bureau party to Hermosillo the Indians became restive and soon withdrew beyond the desert. In the course of the ensuing winter a group returned to the neighborhood of Costa Rica, where, by aid of strategy, seven warriors (including some of those seen at the rancho in the preceding November) with the families of four, were arrested, taken to Hermosillo, tried, and, according to oral accounts, banished. Irritated by this action, and connecting with it the visit of Don Pascual and the strangers desiring their language and sacred things, the clans resumed the warpath, displaying special animosity toward the residents of Costa Rica. There were a few minor skirmishes; then, at the instance of the state officials, a number of Papago Indians, who are feared by the Seri beyond all other enemies, were domiciled at the rancho, where their mere presence proved a sufficient protection. Meantime, according to apparently trustworthy press accounts, two small exploring parties entered Seriland; the first consisted of seven prospectors, who kept well together until about to leave the territory, when one of their number fell behind—and his companions saw him no more, though they carefully retraced their trail beyond the

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point at which he had stopped; the other was a German naturalist-prospector with two mozos (servant-companions), purporting to hail from Chihuahua, who started across the delta-plain of Rio Bacuache and Desierto Encinas with saddle animals, and never reappeared. 648

Then came the second expedition of the Bureau of American Ethnology, to which several Papago domiciled at Costa Rica were attached as guards. While the party were at the rancho the day before the first entrada into Seriland via Barranca Salina, a party of vaqueros from Rancho Santa Ana tended a herd of stock to the barranca for water; one of the animals strayed behind a dune, and the vaqueros, following its trail, came on a small band of Seri already devouring the entrails, and attacked them so vigorously that they escaped only by outrunning the horses, leaving behind all their unattached possessions, including a bow and quiver of arrows and an ancient and nonusable army rifle. This incident, albeit typical, was untimely, and doubtless aided in rendering the Indians too wild to permit communication with the aliens during the ensuing weeks spent in their territory. 123 648

After the withdrawal of this expedition the Seri resumed their range over the borderland plain, with the evident intention of avenging the insult of the invasion. There were a number of skirmishes, in which some of the Papago guards of the 1895 expedition were wounded and had horses killed under them, though they did customary execution on the worse-armed Seri; and extensively published press items indicate that, toward the end of January, 1896, a party of five gold prospectors landed on Tiburon, whence one escaped. 648 721

A well-attested episode ensued toward the end of 1896: Captain George Porter and Sailor John Johnson spent the later part of the summer in cruising the coasts of the Gulf, collecting shells, feathers, and other curios in the small sloop *World*. About the end of October they apparently anchored in Rada Ballena; and a day or two later Captain Martin Mendez, of Guaymas, in charge of the schooner *Otila*, being driven up the gulf and into Bahia Kunkaak by storms, came on a horde of Seri looting Porter's vessel. The episode received publicity on Mendez's return to Guaymas; United States Consular Agent Crocker instituted inquiries, and Governor Corral sent a force to Costa Rica, where, after some delay, a parley was held with a strong band of Seri under the chiefship of "a seven-foot warrior named El Mudo (The Mute), . . . so called for his reticence of speech."[1] The testimony obtained at the parley and from Captain Mendez indicates that Porter and Johnson landed, or at least approached the shore, probably in a small boat; that they were met by a shower of arrows, under which Johnson immediately fell, while Porter defended himself with a shot- 648

[1] San Francisco Chronicle, October 10, 1896, p. 3. The details of the episode, including the correspondence of Consular Agent Crocker, were printed in the newspapers of San Diego (the place of residence of Porter and Johnson), as well as in those of San Francisco and other cities; and there was considerable correspondence concerning the matter with the State Department at Washington. Some reports account that the bodies of Porter and Johnson were cast to fragments and devoured, but these details naturally lack confirmation. El Mudo's portrait appears on plate XIX. [113]

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● 648 gun, slaying five of the Seri before he was himself transfixed; that the vessel was then looted, and that Mendez and his crew were prevented from landing and apparently driven off by the Seri force. In the course of the parley the state officials "demanded the surrender of the ring-leaders in the massacre", with the alternative of "regarding the whole tribe as guilty and punishing them accordingly"; but El Mudo, evidently holding the invasion of the island as the initial transgression and deeming the loss of the tribe under Porter's marksmanship as more than commensurate with the Caucasian loss, peremptorily ended the conference and returned to the island. Vigorous efforts were made to pursue the tribesmen beyond their practically impassable frontier, with the usual product of ruined horses and famished riders. Then the episode died away in an armed neutrality strained somewhat beyond the normal. Meantime the Papago guards remained at Costa Rica. "They are continuously on the lookout for these Seris, and once or twice have killed a stray one or two."[1]

Both before and after the Porter-Johnson episode schemes were devised by various parties, chiefly Californians, for obtaining concessions covering Tiburon and its resources, most of these schemes involving plans for the extermination of the Seri; and press accounts indicate that a concession covering the islands of the gulf above the latitude of 29° (i. e., including about half of Isla Tiburon) was granted to an American company of much distinction. It would appear from numerous news items that representatives of the company sought to land on Tiburon, where they were first cajoled with offerings of food, afterward found to be poisonous, and later driven off by an enlarged force of naked archers. A recent publication bearing some official sanction announces that "Mr. W. J. Lyons, of Hermosillo, Sonora, has secured a concession for the exploration of the island and in November of this year will fit out an expedition for that purpose."[2] The various movements are significant as indices of current opinion and official policy with respect to the tribe.

On the whole, the later episodes are natural sequels of the eventful and striking earlier history of the Seri; and they can only be interpreted as pointing to early extinction of one of the most strongly marked and distinctive of aboriginal tribes.

[113]

[1] The quotations are from the account of T. H. Risdon, of San Diego, prepared on his return from a visit to Costa Rica.

[2] El Estado de Sonora, Mexico. Sus Industrias, Comercio, Minería y Manufacturas. Obra Publicada bajo los Auspicios del Gobierno del Estado. Obra Ilustrada, Octubre de 1897. By J. R. Southworth, Hogabee, p. 73.

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101 Upan Guaimas—1763; [Nentwig?], Rudo Ensayo, p. 238.
Upanguaima—1864; Orozco y Berra, Geografía de las Lenguas, p. 42.
M75 Upanguaimas—1879; Malte-Brun, Congrès International des Américanistes, tome ii, p. 38.
Upanguayma—Synthetic form.
Upanguaymas—1882; Bancroft, Works (Native Races, vol. i, p. 605).
Upan-Guaymas—1890; Bandelier, Investigations in the Southwest, p. 75.

Possibly the name *Cocomaques* (1804, Orozco y Berra, Geografía de las Lenguas, p. 42), or *Cocomaques* (1727, Rivera, Diario y Derrotero, i. 514–1519) should be introduced among the synonyms of the Seri, but in the absence of definite information it may perhaps better be left unassigned.[1]

101 Of the four tribes assigned to the stock, the Upanguayma have been extinct probably for more than a century; the Guayma may survive in
197 a few representatives probably of mixed blood and adopted language; the Tepoka have never received systematic investigation, but appear to survive in limited numbers on the eastern coast of Gulf of California about the embouchure of the Rio Ignacio sand-wash; while the Seri alone continue to form a prominent factor in Sonoran thought.

External Relations

131 The most conspicuous characteristic of the Seri tribe as a whole is
648 isolation. The geographic position and physical features of their habitat favor, and indeed measurably compel, isolation: their little principality is protected on one side by stormy seas and on the other by still more forbidding deserts; their home is too hard and poor to tempt conquest, and their possessions too meager to invite spoliation; hence, under customary conditions, they never see neighbors save in chance encounters on their frontier or in their own predatory forays—and in either case the encounters are commonly inimical. The natural isola-
[186] tion of the habitat is reflected in modes of life and habits of thought; and during the ages the physical isolation has come to be reflected in a bitter and implacable hereditary enmity toward aliens—an enmity apparently forming the strongest motive in their life and thought, and indeed grown into a persistent instinct. Thus the Seri stand alone in every respect; they are isolated in habitat and still more intensely isolated in habits of thought and life from all contemporaries; they far out-Ishmael the Ishmael of old on Araby's deserts.

648 The isolation of the Seri in thought and feeling is well illustrated by the relations with their nearest neighbors (activitally as well as geographically), the Papago Indians. The Papago are much esteemed
[115] in Sonora as fearless fighters, always ready to join or even to lead a forlorn hope; yet when the expedition of 1895 was projected it was found no easy matter to induce the picked Papago guards quartered at Costa Rica to enter Seriland. They were ready, indeed mildly eager, for fray, provided it were on the frontier; but they held back in dread

[1] These names seem rather to be Yaqui. cf. Cocopa, Cocomicopa, Sobaipa, etc.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

from actual invasion of the territory of the hereditary enemy. Like representatives of the faith-dominated culture grades generally, they spoke weightily of inherent rights descended from the ancient time, even back unto the creation; they repeatedly declared the right of the Seri to protect their territory because it was *theirs;* yet their converse but served to show the depth and persistence of their abhorrence of the Seri and of everything pertaining to them. And when gales arose to delay the work, when the frail craft of the party was storm buffeted and lost for days, when they were seized with the strange sickness of the sea, when the salt and sugar mysteriously disappeared (having been secretly sacrificed to diminish suffering from thirst), when all of the earth-powers and air-powers seemed to be arrayed against the expedition, they stoically held it to be but just punishment for a sacrilegious infraction of the ancient law—and their steady adherence to duty, despite tradition and physical difficulty and constant danger, revealed a real heroism. The strain was no slight one; it may have been felt more by the stay-at-homes than by the men in action; certainly a sister of one of the party (Anton Castillo) and spouse of a supporter at the supply station broke under the strain, and died of her terrors—and the return of the party was, to the Papago women and oldsters at least, as the rising of the dead. The dread inspired by the personal presence of the alien is stronger still; when the Seri rancherías at Costa Rica was visited in 1894 it was found needful to keep the Papago interpreter and others of the tribe at a distance, since the mere sight of the inimical tribesmen threw even the women and children into watchful irritation, like that of range-bred horses at scent of bear or timber-wolf, or that of oft-harried cats and swine at sight of passing dog—they instinctively huddled into circles facing outward, and ceased to think connectedly under the stress of nervous tension. The irritation was so far mutual that it was days before the usually placid interpreter, Jose Lewis, recovered his normal spirits; while the 1895 interpreter, Hugh Norris, was actually rendered ill by the mere entrance into Seriland at Pozo Escalante. And the antipathy between Seri and Yaqui is nearly as great as that between the common-boundary neighbors. 648 [123] [115]

The instinctive antagonism, or race antipathy, between the Seri and the widely distinct Caucasian is less trenchant and intense than the local antipathy; yet even between Seri and Caucasian there would seem to be hardly a germ of sympathy. In the days of his prime, the Tiburon islanders flocked around Don Pascual, first as a provider of easy provender and later as a superpotent shaman whose wrath bore destruction; yet their allegiance was never more than that of the cowed and beaten brute to a hated trainer, and his cunning never brought a smile to their stolid features—indeed, his passage among their jacales was met with the same stolid yet sinister indifference accorded the solitary visitor to a menagerie of caged carnivores. And no sooner did his vision become

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impaired than their fear-born veneration evaporated, and their native antipathy reappeared in original virulence. The 1894 party was fortunate in successfully treating a sick wife of sub-chief Mashém, and subsequently spent days in the rancheria, distributing gifts to old and young in a manner unprecedented in their experience and making liberal exchanges for such small possessions as they wished to spare; yet, with a single possible exception, they succeeded in bringing no more human expression to any Seri face or eye than curiosity, avidity for food, studied indifference, and shrouded or snarling disgust. Among themselves they were fairly cheerful, and the families were unobtrusively affectionate; yet the cheerfulness was always chilled and often banished by the approach of an alien. The Sonorenses generally hold the Seri in indescribably deep dread as uncanny and savage monsters lying beyond the human pale; while the reciprocal feeling on the part of the Seri toward Caucasians, and still more toward Indian aliens, seems akin to that of the average man toward the rattlesnake, which he flees or slays without pause for thought—it seems nothing less than intuitive and involuntary loathing. The Seri antipathy is at once deepened into an obsession and crystallized into a cult; the highest virtue in their calendar is the shedding of alien blood; and their normal impulse on meeting an alien is to kill unless deterred by fear, to flee if the way is clear, and to fawn treacherously for better opportunity if neither natural course lies open.

Concordantly with their primary characteristic, the Seri have avoided ethnic and demotic union beyond the narrow limits of their own kindred; and even of these they seem to have cast out parts, annihilating the Guayma and Upanguayma, displacing and nearly destroying the Tepoka, and outlawing individuals and (apparently) small groups. The earlier chronicles indicate that the Jesuit missionaries, and after them the Franciscan friars and the secular officials, sought to scatter the tribe by both cajolery and coercion, and endeavored to divide families by restraint of women and children and by banishment of wives; there are loose traditions, too, of the capture and enslavement of Indian and Caucasian women in Seriland; yet the great fact remains that not a single mixed blood Seri is known to exist, and that no more than two of the blood (Kolusio and perhaps one other) now live voluntarily beyond the territorial and consanguineal confines of the tribe. The romantic story of a white slave and ancestress of a Seri clan, sometimes diffused through pernicious reportorial activity, is without shadow of proof or probability; the tradition of the captivity of a Papago belle was corroborated, albeit indefinitely, by Mashém's naive admission that an alien women was once kept as a slave to a childless death due to her ineptitude for long wanderings; and there is not a single known fact inlicating even so much as miscibility of the Seri blood with that of other varieties of the genus *Homo*. Naturally the presumption of miscibility holds in the absence of direct evidence; yet the presumption

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is at least partially countervailed by conspicuous biotic characters, such as color, stature, etc., so distinctive as almost to seem specific: the Seri are distinctively dark-skinned, their extreme color-range (so far as known) being less than their nearest approach to any neighboring tribe; they are nearly as distinctive in stature, the difference between their tallest and shortest normal adults being apparently less than that between their shortest and the tallest of the neighboring Papago—though they are not so far from the more variable and often tall Yaqui; and they appear to be no less distinctive in such physiologic processes as those connected with their extraordinary food habits. Still more distinctive are the demotic characters connected with their habits of life and modes of thought; and when the [illegible] of biotic and demotic characters is taken, the Seri are found to be set apart from all neighboring Sonoran tribes by differences much more striking than the individual range among themselves.[1]

It is especially noteworthy that the Seri have held aloof from that communality of the deserts which has brought so many tribes into union with each other and with their animal and vegetal neighbors through common strife against the common enemies of sun and sand—the communality expressed in the distribution of vital colonies over arid plains, in the toleration and domestication of animals, in the development of agriculture, and eventually in the shaping of a comprehensive solidarity, with the intelligence of the highest organism as the controlling factor.[2] Dwelling on a singularly prolific shore, the Seri never learned the hard lesson of desert solidarity, but looked on the land merely as a place of lodgment or concealment, or as a source of luxuries such as cactus tunas, mesquite beans, and tasty game; they never formed the first idea of planting or cultivating, and their only notion of harvesting and storing against time of need was the intolerably filthy one of nature's simplest teaching; they apparently never grasped the concept of cooperation with animals, and came to tolerate the parasitical coyote only in that its persistence was greater than their own, and in so far as it was stealthy enough to hide its travail and the suckling of its young against their ravening maws; and they apparently never rose to real recognition of their own kind in alien forms, but set their hands against agricultural and sacerdotal humans as peculiarly potent and hence especially obnoxious animals. Naturally their racial intolerance was seed of battle and blood-feud; and they would doubtless have melted away under the general antagonism but for the natural barriers and unlimited food of their restricted domain.

At present, as for the later and best-known decades of their history,

[1] It seems probable that the Seri were nearer in tribes of southern Baja California than to those of Sonora at the time of the earliest explorations, yet that the distinction was sufficiently strong to warrant the extension of the proposition to these tribes also.

[2] "The Beginning of Agriculture," American Anthropologist, vol. viii, 1895, p. 350. "The Beginning of Zoöculture," ibid., vol. x, 1897, p. 295 et seq.

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the Seri are absolutely without extratribal affiliations, or even sympathy. When the chronicles of three centuries are scanned in the light of recent knowledge, it seems practically certain that they have been equally isolated since the dawn of Caucasian history in Mexico; and both recent data and the chronicles combine with the principles of demotic development to indicate that the Seri have stood alone from the beginning of their tribal career, and have never foregathered with the neighboring tribes of distinct blood, distinct arts and industries, distinct organization, distinct language, and distinct thought and feeling.

The present isolation of the Seri throws light on their early history and reveals the extent of the misapprehension of the pioneer missionaries, who half deluded themselves and wholly deluded distant readers into the notion that the Seri were really proselyted and actually collected in the mission adjuncts of military posts established to protect settlers against forays of the tribe; for, as illumined by later and fuller knowledge of the tribal characteristics, the chronicles are seen to indicate merely that a few captives, malingerers, cripples, spies, and tribal outcasts were harbored at the missions until death and occasional escapes brought the colonies to a natural end, with no real assimilation of blood or culture on either side. So, too, the persistent tribal antipathy reveals the error of confounding the independent or even inimically related outbreaks of the Seri and of the Pima or Apache with the concerted action of confederated tribes. Doubtless the ever-watchful spies from Tiburon habitually gave notice of the disturbance due to outbreaks of contemporary tribes, just as they do today when the local soldiery are withdrawn for duty on the Yaqui frontier; naturally the civil and military authorities were thereby led to provide for protection against the Seri and Pima, against the Seri and Pima, or against the Seri and Apache at each period of disturbance, just as they provided against the Seri between periods; and it would appear that this association in thought and speech led to the unconscious magnification, in the minds of the chroniclers, of a supposed alliance.

In brief, the tribal relations of the Seri seem always to have been antipathetic, especially toward the aboriginal tribes of alien blood, in somewhat less measure toward Caucasians, but in least—yet still considerable—degree toward their own collinguals and (presumptive) consanguineals.

POPULATION

So far as could be ascertained by inquiries of and through Mashém in 1894, the Seri tribe then comprised about 60 or 70 warriors, with between three and four times as many women and children—i. e., the population was apparently between 250 and 350. The group of about 60 (including 17 warriors) seen at Costa Rica was evidently growing rapidly, to judge from the proportion of youths of both sexes, infants in arms, and pregnant women; and there are other indications that

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Rica) noted for his prowess in hunting. One hot afternoon he begged 224
relief from his tasks, saying the spirit of catching a deer had hold on him; and he was excused on condition that the deer be brought entire to the rancho. Two hours later he was seen driving in a full-grown buck; on approaching the rancho the terrified animal turned this way and that, describing long arcs in wild efforts to avoid the human habitation; yet the hunter kept beyond it, heading it off at every turn and gradually working it nearer, until, at a sudden turn, he was able to rush on it; whereupon he caught it, threw it over his shoulders, and ran in to the rancho with the animal still struggling and kicking off its overheated hoofs.

Señor Encinas himself, with Don Andrés Noriega and several other [648]
attachés, vouch for the catching of a horse by a Seri hunter in still more expeditious fashion: one of the horses belonging to the rancho was exceptionally fat, and hence exceptionally tempting to the Seri band (and at the same time worthless to the vaqueros); the chief begged for it persistently until, wearied by his importunities, the ranchero offered the horse to the band on condition that a single one of them should catch it within a fixed distance (about 200 yards) from the gateway of the corral—and the offer was promptly accepted. With the view of making the test of fleetness fair, a vaquero was called in to frighten the horse and start him running around the interior of the corral, while a boy stood by to drop the bars at the proper moment, the Indian standing ready outside the gateway; when the animal had gained its best speed the bars were dropped and it bolted for the open plains—but before the 200-yard limit was reached the hunter had overtaken it, leaped on its withers, caught it by the jaw in one hand and the foretop in the other, and thereby thrown it in such manner as to break its neck. Knowing of these and other instances, L. K. Thompson, of Hermosillo, undertook arrangements for publicly exhibiting Seri runners as deer catchers at different expositions during the nineties; but his arrangements failed, chiefly because of the anticipated (and probably underestimated) difficulty of taming the Seri sufficiently for the purpose.

About 1893, Señor Encinas and several attendants left Costa Rica 481
one morning for Hermosillo, leaving at the rancho, among others, a Seri matron with a sick child nearly a year old; in the evening (as they learned later) the child was worse, and the matron took the trail about dusk, in the hope of finding a cure in the white man's touch or other medicine—and at dawn next morning she was at Molino del Encinas, 17 leagues (nearly 45 miles) away, with her helpless child and a peace offering in the form of a hare, which she had run down and caught in the course of the journey. And the matrons, with children astride their hips and water-filled ollas balanced on their heads, and all their goods and chattels piled on their backs, habitually traverse [484]
Desierto Encinas from the sea to Costa Rica (some 30 miles), or from Costa Rica to the sea, in a night.

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412 rubbing face-paint, for bruising woody tissue to aid in breaking ocatillo poles for house-frames or mesquite roots for harpoons (both afterward finished by firing), and on occasion for weapons; and this many-functioned tool is initially but a wave-worn pebble, is artificially shaped only by the wear of use, and is incontinently discarded when sharp edges are produced by use or fortuitous fracture. The hupf is supplemented chiefly by the simple perforator of mandible or bone or fire-hardened wood; and these two primitive implements, together with mollusean shells in natural condition, apparently serve as the primary tools for all the mechanical operations of the tribe.

726 The dearth of tools and the absence not only of knives but of knife-sense among the Seri illumine those traditions of Seri fighting made tangible by the teeth-torn arm of Jesus Omada; for they explain the alleged resource of the Seri warriors to nature's weapons, used in the centripetal fashion characteristic of nascent intelligence.

186 The Seri are distinguished by another trait hardly less striking than the pedestrian habit, and even more conspicuous than the teeth-and-nail habit with the correlative absence of tool-sense; the trait is not tangible enough for ready definition or description in terms (of course because so unusual as not to have bred words for its expression), but is akin to—or, more properly, an exceeding intensification of—receptivity in all its protean manifestations; it may be called *race-sense*. Like other primitive folk, the Seri are self-centered (or egocentric) in individual thought, i. e., they habitually think of the extraneous phenomena of their little universe with reference to self, as in the labyrinth of consanguineal relationship extending and ramifying from the speaker; furthermore, they typify primitive culture in their collective thinking, which is tribe-centered (or ethnocentric), i. e., they view extraneous things, especially those of animate nature, with reference to the tribe, like all those lowly folk who denote themselves by the most dignified terms in their vocabulary and designate aliens by opprobrious epithets; but the Seri surpass most, if not all, other tribes in dignifying themselves and derogating contemporary aliens. Concordantly with this habitual sentiment, they glory in their strength and swiftness, and are inordinately proud of their fine figures and excessively vain of their luxuriant locks—indeed, they seem to exalt their own bodies and their own kind well toward, if not beyond, the verge of inchoate deification. The obverse of the same sentiment appears in the hereditary hate and horror of aliens attested by their history, by [826] their persistent blood-thirst, and by the rigorous marriage regulations 186 609 adapted to the maintenance of tribal purity; for just as their highest virtue is the shedding of alien blood, so is their blackest crime the transmission of their own blood into alien channels. The potency of the sentiment is established by the unparalleled isolation of the tribe [648] after centuries of contact with Caucasians, by their irrelucible love of native soil, by their implacable animosity toward invaders, and by

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

their rigorously maintained purity of blood; it is manifested in their commonplace conduct by a singular combination of hauteur and servility, forbidding association with aliens on terms of equality. The entire group at Costa Rica in 1894 were on good behavior, partly, no doubt, for profit, partly because they were at peace bought by bloodshed; yet they kept an impassable gulf between themselves and the Caucasians, and a still wider chasm against the Papago and Yaqui. They came to the tanque, usually in groups, rarely alone, always alert; especially when alone or in twos or threes, they moved slowly and stealthily in their peculiar collected and up-stepping gait, often stopping, always glancing furtively with roving eyes, and bearing a curious air of self-repression—as of the camp-prowling coyote who seems to hold down his instinctively bristling mane by voluntary effort. And the visitor to their rancheria sent a wave of influence before as his approach was noted; laughter ceased, languor disappeared, and a forced, yet sullen, amiability took their place, though the children and females edged away; if he appeared unexpectedly or came too close, the children and younger adults simply flitted like young partridges, while the elders stiffened rigidly, with bristling brows and everting lips and purpling eyes, perhaps accompanied by harsh gutturization—indeed the curiously canine snarl and growl, often evoked by the stranger unintentionally, betrayed the bitterness of Seri antipathy toward even the most tolerable aliens. Every human is panoplied in a personality, perhaps intangible but none the less real, which repels undue approach and fixes limits to familiarity on the part of strangers, friends, kinsmen, and mates, according to their respective degrees of mutually elective affinity; but the Seri are so close to each other and so far from all others that they are collectively panoplied against extra-tribal personalities even as are antipathetic animals against each other—and the Seri can no more control the involuntary snarl and growl at the approach of the alien than can the hunting-dog at sight or smell of the timber-wolf.

While the highly developed traits represented by pedestrian habit and hand-and-tooth habit and segregative habit expressing race-sense are conspicuous during exercise, each carries an equally well-marked obverse. Thus, while the Seri are known as runners par excellence in a region of runners, and were named by aboriginal neighbors from their spryness of movement, they have been no less notorious among the Caucasian settlers of two generations for unparalleled laziness—for a lethargic sloth beyond that of sluggish ox and somnolent swine, which was an irritating marvel to the patient padres of the eighteenth century, and is today a byword in the even-tempered Land of Mañana; concordantly the sinewy hands and muscular jaws are noticeably inert during the intervals between intense functionings, are practically free from the spontaneous or nervous movements of habitually busy persons, and contribute by their immobility to the air of indolence or languor which

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

strong wrench on the horns or stunned with a blow of war-club or hupf, as conditions may demand. Straggling swine and wandering dogs are occasionally ambushed or stalked and transfixed with arrows, torn hurriedly into fragments, or shouldered and carried off struggling, as exigency may require; while sheep and goats are practically barred from the entire Seri frontier because of their utter helplessness in the face of so hardy huntsmen.

The quantity of stock consumed by the Seri varies greatly with the policy of rancheros and vaqueros. At different times during the last two and a half centuries it has been estimated that the chief portion of the subsistence of the tribe was derived from stolen stock, and it is probable that during the early period of the Encinas régime this

FIG. 23—Desiccated pork.

estimate was fair; but under the Draconian rule of a Seri head for each head of slaughtered stock, the consumption is reduced to a few dozen head annually, including superannuated, crippled, and diseased animals unable to keep up with the herds, those bogged in Playa Noriega and other basins during freshets, the stallions and bulls slain in strife for leadership of their bands, and the festering or semimummied carcasses gladly turned over by idle rancheros on the chance visits of Seri bands to the frontier (such as the specimen in the photograph reproduced in figure 23).

No special devices have been developed in connection with the chase for stock, nor has material progress been made in acquiring Caucasian devices. There are, indeed, indications of a disposition to use

I: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

the crudeness of the work, strongly supports the inference that the stone arrow-making of the Seri was originally a fetichistic mimicry of alien devices—a plane, indeed, above which the craft has hardly risen even in recent decades. 174 324

While the Seri are devoid of military tactics in the strict sense of the term, they have certain customs of warfare which seem to be scrupulously observed. These customs are closely akin to those followed in hunting the larger land animals—indeed, the warfare of the tribe is merely an intensified counterpart of their chase. 726 [224]

The favorite tactical device of the warriors, as indicated by the great majority of their battles, is the ambuscade, laid and sprung either with or without the aid of decoys (usually aged women). Sometimes a considerable body act in concert under a prearranged plan; more commonly a few warriors only are involved at the outset, though these may be joined as the crisis approaches by companions lurking behind rocks and shrubs to be either on hand at the finish or in the way of ready flight, according to the turn of the battle-tide; and it is probable that the greater part of the ambuscades prove stillborn by reason of the oozing courage of leaders and the shirking of their supporters if the prospective victims present a bold front, or if the final omens are otherwise adverse. The ambuscade, with its flying contingent, grades into the device of stalking a stationary or slowly moving enemy, the stealthy approach terminating either in covert attack at close range or in sudden rush by a superior force. The theory, or rather the instinctive plan, of the campaign is to seek advantage in both position and numbers, to keep under cover until the instant of attack, to have sure and ample lines of retreat, and in every way to minimize individual risk.

There is a widespread notion toward the Seri frontier that the savages are given to sorties and surprises by night; but both specific testimony and the records indicate, when carefully analyzed, that this tactical device is much less common in practice than in repute, and is not, indeed, characteristic of the tribe. A few known battles began in attacks by night; but the war parties, like the hunting and fishing parties (save in the semiceremonial pelican pilgrimages), display decided preference for daylight in their forays—indeed, there are various indications that the folk are much more timid and oppressed with superstitious fears by night than by day.

In rare cases small parties of aliens have been half openly surrounded and done to death by considerably larger parties of the savage folk; but this method, too, is incongruous with the fixed habits of the tribe and with the deep-planted instinct of avoiding personal exposure.

A considerable number of the long list of homicides charged against the Seri, and marking the beginning of many of their battles, were individual rather than collective, the consummation of inimical impulse sometimes treacherously concealed for favorable opportunity, as in the 186 648

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

186 pitiful case of Fray Crisóstomo Gil, and otherwhiles rising explosively
648 beyond the feeble control of the untrained mind; for the impulse of enmity toward aliens is an ever-present possession—or obsession—of the tribe, and a reflection of that race-sense which is their most distinctive attribute.

726 Of open warfare and face-to-face fighting there is hardly a germ among the Seri. When themselves ambushed or surrounded, some of their stouter warriors have in a few instances faced the foe for a few minutes at a time, as is shown by the annals of Cerro Prieto; yet this accidental attitude but betokens the play of chance rather than the plan of choice. Concordantly, the folk avoid the method of warfare (so common among other Amerind tribes as to be properly considered characteristic) involving open duel between chiefs and other warriors; they seem to be devoid of that sense of fairness in fighting which finds expression in the duel; and despite the individual advantages growing out of gigantic stature, immense strength, and superior swiftness, they habitually seek to combine in numbers against panicked or baffled enemies, just as their hunters throw themselves mercilessly on surrounded quarry. Of open boldness or confident prowess no trace appears; and the body of facts seems to justify the prevailing Sonoran opinion that the warfare of the Seri is treacherous and cowardly in design, craven and cruel in execution.

Once begun, the conduct of the fray by the Seri fighters is fairly uniform; the warriors either discharge clouds of arrows from their coigns of vantage, or rush to brain their victims with stones, or to break their necks and limbs and crush in their chests, as in the slaughtering of quarry; and according to the tale of the occasional survivors—Señor Pascual Encinas and his son Manuel, Don Ygnacio Lozania, Don Andrés Noriega, Don Jesus Omada of Bacuachito, and Don Ramon Noriega of Pozo Noriega, are among the survivors and informants; also the sturdy Papago fighters, Mariano, Anton, Miguel, and Anton Castillo (whose sister died of dread while he was on the 1895 expedition)—the rushing warriors are transfigured with frenzy; their eyes blaze purple and green, their teeth glisten through snarling lips, their hair half rises in bristling mane, while their huge chests swell and their lithe limbs quiver in a fury sudden and blind and overpowering as that of springing puma or charging peccary. Of the successful assaults the ghastly end is rarely recorded, though whispered large in the lore of Sonora; in the unsuccessful assaults recounted by survivors the blood-frenzy burned but briefly and died swiftly as the disappointed warriors skulked silently behind rocks and shrubs, or fled across the sands with inconceivable fleetness. These details of battle precisely parallel the details of butchery of beastly quarry, as recounted by local observers and corroborated by Mashém's recitals.

[115]

266 So far as can be ascertained the parallelism between frenzied battling
727 and furious butchery in the chase affords the chief basis for the firm

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

bolic weapon, the counterfeit cartridge, the imitation machete, or other charm against alien power; it is usually he who wears the white man's hat or random garment in lieu of the deer or lion mask of earlier days; and during recent years his most-prized fetish, and one which practically insures the support of his fellows, is a written certificate of his chiefship from Señor Encinas, or, still better, from El Gobernador at Hermosillo. Yet he is a throneless and even homeless potentate, sojourning, like the rest of his fellows, in such jacales as his two or three or four wives may erect, wandering with season and sisterly whim, chased often by rumors of invasion or by fearsome dreams, and restrained by convention even from chiding his own children in his wives' jacales save through the intercession of female relatives. 643 [648]

In 1894 the head chief was reported to be on Tiburon; the putative chief of the rancheria at Costa Rica was the taciturn giant known as El Mudo (plate XIX); while Mashém (or Juan Estorga) was the head of one of the Pelican clans.

ADOPTION

One of the more important factors in demotic development among primitive peoples (probably second only to interclan marriage in extending sympathy and unifying law) is adoption; and special efforts were made to obtain data relating to the subject. Direct inquiries were futile, the responses indicating that the entire subject is foreign to the thought of the tribe; but three sporadic and measurably incongruous examples of quasi adoption are worthy of record. 594 [124]

The most specific case is that of Lieutenant Hardy, who visited Isla Tiburon in 1826, and was fortunate in gaining the confidence of the tribe through successful medical treatment of the wife of the chief. On his second landing he was greeted with many expressions of gratitude, which were especially exuberant on the part of the daughter of the family (always a personage in Seri custom), who insisted on painting his face. He specifies: 597 648

> Not wishing to deny her the indulgence of this innocent frolic, I quietly suffered her to proceed. She mixed up part of a cake of blue color, which resembles ultramarine (and of which I have a specimen), in a small shell; in another, a white color, obtained by ground talc, and in a third was mixed a color obtained from the red flint-stone of the class which I before stated was to be found on Seal Island, and resembled cinnabar. With the assistance of a pointed stick the tender artist formed perpendicular narrow stripes down my cheeks and nose, at such distances apart as to admit of an equally narrow white line between them. With equal delicacy and skill the tops and bottoms of the white lines were finished off with a white spot. If the cartilage of my nose at the nostrils had been perforated so as to admit a small, round, white bone, five inches in length, tapering off at both ends and rigged something like a cross-jack yard, I might have been mistaken for a native of the island. As soon as the operation was finished, the whole party set up a roar of merry laughter, and called me "Hermano, Capitan Tiburon," being the very limited extent of their knowledge of Spanish.[1] [386] [302]

[1] Travels, p. 286.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

597 648 While the lieutenant attached no significance to the painting, the procedure would seem to have been a ceremonial adoption, such as might, for example, be used in connection with a confederate clan. The description of the painting is sufficiently explicit to identify the totem with that of the Turtle clan, represented by the clanmother and the daughter of the clan at Costa Rica in 1894 (plates XVIII and XXIV); but it is noteworthy that the salutation with which the ceremony terminated, and which may be rendered "Captain-Brother of the Sharks", would seem to identify the totem with the shark rather than the turtle.[1]

The second case of adoption (if so it may be styled) was that of Señor Encinas, after his bloodiest battle, in which nearly all of the Seri warriors were left on the field. In this case there was no ceremony, or at least none remembered by the beneficiary; he was merely informed by a delegation of aged dames that thenceforth he would be regarded as a stronger and more invulnerable chief (shaman) than any member of the tribe, and hence as the tribal leader.

173 563 727 The third instance is still less definite, though it seems to be trustworthy. There is a widespread tradition throughout Sonora that in the course of a brush between a band of Papago hunters and a marauding bunch of Seri warriors in the mountains southeast of Cieneguilla twenty-five or thirty years ago, a Papago maiden was captured and carried off to Tiburon; and that for some years thereafter—i. e., until the Papago had taken ample blood-vengeance—the intertribal animosity was exceptionally bitter. No wholly satisfactory basis for the traditions could be found among the Papago, though some of the silences of the old men were suggestive; nor was the tradition fully credited by Señor Encinas, despite its deep lodgment in the minds of some of his yoemanry. When Mashém was interrogated on different occasions, he merely shook his head in stolid silence; but when the device was adopted of inquiring the number of Papago children brought into the tribe through this woman he responded promptly with a snort of scorn, and followed this with the explanation that she never had children, and could not because she was an alien slave. The explanation was corroborated by clanmother Juana María and other matrons, with sundry expressions of contemptuous disapproval of the inquiry and scorn of the very idea that aliens could fructify within the tribe. Later, the ice being broken, Mashém intimated that the woman had recently died of old age and its consequences—doubtless as an outcast. On the whole, the direct testimony would seem to substantiate the tradition, and to supplement it with the short and simple annals of a spouseless and childless life (incredible of other tribes, but consistent

[124] [773] [1] This identification may possibly be correct, the collocation of the totem with the turtle was shaped through unwilling and perhaps misleading responses made by Mashém to inquiries in 1894—these responses denoting a sea monster which in the beginning helped the Ancient of Pelicans to make the world by pushing from below, and which is now very good food—a description apparently fitting the turtle more closely than the other animal.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

condition characterized by absence of property and thrift-sense; while its most essential concomitant is extratribal antipathy too bitter to permit toleration of alien blood, or even of alien presence save under the constraint of superior force.

MORTUARY CUSTOMS

The prevailing opinion among the better informed Caucasian neighbors of the Seri is that the tribesmen display an inhuman indifference to their dead; and this opinion is one of the factors—combining with current notions as to cannibalism and arrow-poisoning and beastlike toothing in battle—involved in the widespread feeling that the tribesmen are to be accounted as mongrel and uncanny monsters rather than human beings.

The opinion that the Seri neglect their dead on occasion would seem to rest on a considerable body of evidence; Mendoza's record of the numberless neglected corpses of warriors polluting the air and poisoning the streams of Cerro Prieto in 1757 would seem to be unusual only in its fulness; and Señor Encinas, albeit so conservative as to repudiate the reputed anthropophagy and to recognize better qualities among the folk than any contemporary, declares that they are utterly negligent of their dead, save that when the bodies lie near rancherías heaps of brambles are thrown over them to bar—and thus to lessen the disturbance from—prowling coyotes. Quite indubitable, too, is the specific testimony of vaqueros to the effect that Seri raiders overtaken by the Draconian penalty of the frontier merely lie where they fall, even when this is well within reach of the tribesmen, Don Andrés Noriega's verification of his boast (ante, p. 113) being an instance in point. On the other hand stands the conspicuous fact (unknown to the frontiersman) that well-marked cemeteries adjoin some of the rancherías of interior Seriland. The sum of the somewhat discrepant evidence accords with a characteristically unsatisfactory statement by Mashém, to the effect that the mourning ceremonies are important only in connection with women—i. e., matrons—because "the woman is just like the family" ("la muger es como la familia"); and this intimation, in turn, is corroborated by the single known instance of inhumation in Seriland, as well as by certain indirect indications connected with the scatophagic customs (ante, p. 213). On the whole it seems certain that the mortuary ceremonies attain their highest development in connection with females, the recognized blood-bearers and legislators of the tribe.

The special dignification of females in respect to funerary rites is without precise parallel among other American aborigines, so far as is known, but is not without analogues in the shape of (presumptive) vestiges of a former magnification of matrons in the mortuary customs of certain tribes. The vestiges are especially clear among the Iroquoian Indians, whose aboriginal socialry coincided with that of the

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

[p.3]

THE SERI

By A. L. KROEBER, *University of California*

INTRODUCTION

The present paper is the first product of field studies made between January and March, 1930, in Arizona, Sonora, and Sinaloa, under a joint expedition of the Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, and the University of California. The financial contribution of the University was the gift of Mrs. Ethel W. Crocker. While the purpose of the trip was to define rather than solve problems, the following pages contain part of the positive observations obtained. 121

The Seri, who live on Tiburon Island, Sonora, in the Gulf of California, are often considered the wildest and most primitive tribe surviving in North America. They owe this repute partly to McGee's monograph about them, in the Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. It is easy to read between the lines of this description that McGee leaned toward a romantic and imaginative interpretation of the Seri. Also, his actual contacts with the people themselves were brief, and hampered by imperfect communication. Moreover, the Seri have been for three hundred years in contact with Spaniards and Mexicans, part of the time even under direct mission control. It therefore seems doubtful whether their backwardness could be the result wholly of preserved primitiveness, and may not rather be attributable to a recalcitrant degeneration. In order to answer this question, and to place Seri culture at least tentatively among the other tribal cultures of the Southwest instead of leaving it as an unexplained and lurid abnormality, a brief visit to them was undertaken. 114 177 [121]

The success of this visit was due wholly to Sr. Roberto Thomson of Hermosillo and Rancho San Rafael, who is now the Mexican Government's *Jefe de Vigilancia* for the Seris, and in effect what in the United States would be known as Indian Agent for the tribe. He has protected and befriended them, kept them in turn in bounds, and secured some governmental assistance for them, under which they are making a beginning of adaptation to the modern world. At any rate, the mutual raidings and killings have stopped, and the Seri, though still very suspicious of most of the neighboring settlers and of strangers, look upon Sr. Thomson as their protector and friend. Without his introduction and experience, many less data could have been collected in a longer stay. 123 648 [609]

The Seri now live wholly on Tiburon Island. I was with them six days, half of them on the island. This is about as long a time as McGee spent with them—all of it at the cattle ranch of Costa Rica. McGee also explored the island and its camps at some length, but without encountering any Seri, who eluded his party. 114 131

Inasmuch as Mr. Edward H. Davis of Mesa Grande, California, has three times visited Tiburon to form an ethnological collection for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, I attempted no examination of Seri material or economic culture, which Mr. 114 121

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

524 Dice are three splints of cane; tapering toward both ends, nearly flat. The concave inside is greenish white, the outside darker. The count is: 0 insides up, win 4; 1 inside up, win 1; 2 insides up, lose 1 and play; 3 insides up, lose 4. The 3 splints are stacked together, then thrown endwise against the palm, a piece of turtle shell, or anything similar, so as to fly forward and scatter on the ground. (Some players probably acquire a degree of skill in making the canes fall right.) A player repeats until he throws 2 whites or insides. For points scored, he draws lines on the ground in front of himself. His opponent erases his lines as he wins, or adds to them as he loses, until he himself is ahead, when he begins to mark his own lines. Ten points wins the game. A stick is then set in the ground by the winner, who goes on playing the next game. That is, if he has 8, and throws 4, he sets up his stick, erases 6 lines so as to start the new game with a credit of 2, and throws again. The Seri perform these additions and subtractions with the rapidity of a practiced white man.

A ring of people may play at once. Their scoring in relation to one another was not ascertained, but it is presumably each from his neighbor, with the totals shown by sticks.

Since with fair throws the losses in this game must equal gains, a lead of 10 over an opponent is as much as could expectably be played for if the game were not to be unduly protracted.

526 Football race is played with *palo fierro* balls, perhaps 3 inches in diameter, one to each side of 4 runners. The ball may be moved only with the foot. The race is along the beach, where cactus and brush do not interfere. The distance, according to places named to Sr. Thomson and known to him, is about 6 miles. The men on a side relieve each other in informal relays; usually only 1 or 2 finish. The [648] Seri once went north to play the Papago this game, but lost.

Shinny is a woman's game, preliminary to the football race. Four women to a side carry sticks with which they try to throw an 8-12 inch hoop to a goal mark at the end of a short field. Behind each side stand the 4 men runners who are to race with a ball.

Notes on Material Culture

482 Women carry loads on their heads with a ring: men with the
[171] pén, Spanish *palanca* or lever, a stick over the shoulder, with load hung from each end. These are the usual Sonora and Sinaloa Indian ways of carrying.

516 The Seri sit and lounge randomly. The men squat, occasionally cross the legs, put them sidewise, or sit with one knee up. The women wear long cloth skirts, but apparently sit just as variously.

714 Body armor, *naitɬanika'p*, with sleeves and helmet, and a shield. saXe'*ti*X, both of hide, were worn. The shield was described as 4 or 5 feet high, roof-shaped toward the front. It is not clear whether

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1960) 1965
NU31 Seri NU31

THE SAVAGE SERIS OF SONORA—I

By EDWARD H. DAVIS AND E. YALE DAWSON

WHEN the Seri Indians pass into extinction, "good riddance" will be voiced by many a Mexican, for centuries of warfare against the invaders of their inhospitable lands have made this small tribe notorious among the aborigines of Mexico. Many people will be ignorant of their passing, but a few of us even now watch with some regret the losing struggle of their diminishing numbers against the spreading civilization that tramples out the wild things and destroys the natural features of the earth. With the Seri goes a link with a past, primeval age of nature in America, for these are a strange and primitive people, a people whose lives and habits assign them to the initial place in the scale of cultural development among American Indians, and hence to the lowest recognized phase of savagery.

In 1540 one of Coronado's officers was the first to capture and bring into the army encampment in Sonora a Seri warrior, an Indian so large and tall that his stature created a sensation among the Spanish soldiery. It was three and a half centuries, however, before the Seri tribe was finally subjugated by an invading force, and then only after the slaughter of nine-tenths of its population.

In modern times, though the encroachment of settlements has forced the Seris into domestic contact with the Mexican people, few outsiders have ever come to know them. Until the fishing village of Kino was settled some ten years ago, there were only two men they counted real friends among aliens. The senior author was one of those. Today the Seri not only must tolerate the encroachment of the Mexican, but must suffer from imported diseases which are gradually destroying him. The present life of the Seri is but an echo of its past, but in this modern world the habits of the survivors of America's most primitive people are none the less astonishing. Their gradual acquisition of modern implements and materials has gone along with centuries of warfare and bloodshed, and their submission to law entails a long story of violence. Before considering these more recent phases of their history, however, let

[p.193(A)]

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614 and the maternal clans disappeared. Today, with the entire tribe numbering no more than 150 persons, the meaning of the painted symbols has become vague and meaningless with respect to the nonexistent clans, yet the custom persists, now largely for personal adornment, and even a male tribesman may sometimes be seen squatting before little dishes of pigments, peering into a ten cent store mirror as he carefully applies the colors (Fig. 11).

618 Had it not been for the Seris' intolerance of aliens they might today constitute a numerous and thriving people, or at least have been absorbed by the polyglot Mexican popu-

[p. 202 (A)]

● 648 lation, but as the Ishmaelites of America they brought misery and death upon themselves by an unwavering belligerence toward all outsiders. The history of their centuries of bitter contest against the forces of law in Sonora is a bloody one, but whatever has been the extent of their wanton looting and murder, there is one crime of which they have long been unjustly accused. Sonora is [266] full of legend and tale of "los canibales," but no convincing evidence has ever come to light proving that the Seris ever practiced cannibalism. Of course, it could be argued that the only ones who might have proved it were killed and eaten.

[p. 202(B)]

[pp. 203-260 have no material relating to the Seri.]

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
NU31 Seri NU31

THE SAVAGE SERIS OF SONORA—II*

By EDWARD H. DAVIS AND E. YALE DAWSON

The beginning of Seri wars was the year 1700 during which they first conducted nocturnal raids on some of the most outlying of the Jesuit mission pueblos of Sonora, killing inhabitants with their arrows and stealing the cattle and horses. Year after year, the gradual expansion of Sonoran settlements and their nearer approach to the borders of the Seri homeland aggravated the conditions of conflict. The vigorous proselyting expeditions of the Jesuit missionaries brought about the capture of some hundred women, children, cripples and vieilards of the Seris, and concurrently the death of many defending warriors. These expeditions further kindled the hatred of the free Seri against the white man, while the few score "converts" gathered about the several missions gained a shocking character for sloth, filth, thievery, treachery, obstinacy and drunkenness. Raids upon the settlements continued and between 1757 and 1763 4,000 mules, mares and horses were known to have been stolen and eaten.

[p. 261(B)] [text continues on p. 262(A)]

[291]

FIG. 14. JUAN TOMAS AND NEPHEW
OLD SERI CHIEF BEFORE CHICO ROMERO AND VETERAN OF MANY WARS, IN 1926 AT THE AGE OF 94 YEARS.

● 648 726 The further extension of settlements necessitated the establishment of military posts from which troops were sent out, first by one, then another governor of Sonora, to destroy all Seris they might find and to discourage their wanton looting and killing. If a strong force was sent out, it was frequently ambushed and many soldiers were left on the field, transfixed by arrows. Many small forces left never to be heard from again. In 1780 an army of national troops met the Seris in several bloody battles in their Cerro Prieto, and claimed to have exterminated the tribe. Yet the Indians retained sufficient vitality to continue their sanguinary raids

[p. 262 (A)]

648 726 on the settlements of Sonora. Many expeditions, fitted out at great expense, were sent against them, but in that barren land, destitute of water, the military parties suffered greatly in their campaigns, and succeeded little in their efforts to conquer the wary natives.

177 648 By 1850 probably every Seri between infancy and decrepitude had seen the proprietor and other inhabitants of the rancho of Don Pascual Encinas at Costa Rica where the Seris were abnormally tolerated and even encouraged to make themselves useful and unobjectionable. They yielded to indolent scavengering more than ever before; they substituted cast-off rags and barter-bought cotton cloth for their pelican robes and other primitive garments. They ate cooked food when it fell their way; half heartedly they adopted metal cutting implements and sought or stole nails and hoop-iron for arrow [191] points. Some acquired a smattering of Spanish and many came to sport Spanish names. Never, however, did more than one or two Seris come to live in a house, nor even to encompass the idea of making adobe. They had not learned to ride horses nor to burden them, but only to use them for immediate slaughter and consumption. They were acquainted with firearms, but it was not until years later that they learned to use them. In and about Rancho Costa Rica the Seris and the Mexicans lived for a time in mutual tolerance, certain depredations being allowed the Indians just as were the rodents of the rancheria.

648 721 When, in 1855, Don Pascual Encinas experienced the loss of unusually large numbers of stock from Seri raids, he was aroused into announcing that a Seri head would be taken for each head of stock stolen. For a while the Indians seemed to acquiesce, but within a few days a group of Seri women "milled" a band of horses, caught and threw one so that its neck was broken, whereupon [252] they immediately sucked its blood, gorged on its intestines, and buried its quarters to "ripen" according to their custom. The vaqueros of the settlement were instructed to shoot the first Seri seen on the llano. Within two days the tribe was on the warpath and the war raged for a decade.

[p.262(B)]

648 726 [161] The Encinas war reduced the tribe to some 350 people, and temporarily discouraged their bloodthirsty raids. By 1893, however, new killings were being reported. In one instance the Seri Chief, Juan Tomas (Fig. 14), watched as the men of a large rancho left for a rodeo and then, worming up through the brush, led his warriors into the buildings and with clubs and arrows massacred every woman and child within. Two Yaqui women who had managed to escape into the brush watched as the warriors seized [727] the infants by their feet and dashed their brains out against a large rock near the corral.

In 1904 a number of wilder Seri, led by several Yaquis, went on the warpath and killed every soul in a Papago village. The war with the Papagos that ensued aroused the Governor of Sonora into action. Nearly 250 armed men were sent out to kill or capture the Yaqui leaders and to administer a severe lesson to the Seris. The desert water holes were all placed under guard until the Seri chief, Juan Tomas, was forced to surrender for his thirsting tribesmen. Peace was conditional on the delivery of the Yaqui leaders with their hands tied together. Two days later a couple of gaunt, wild-looking Seri women, clothed in rags and with painted faces, walked into the camp to keep the conditions of the peace as they had understood them. They carried a palanca between them from which were suspended bundles of severed hands of the Yaquis who had been clubbed to death as they slept.

114 648 Twenty years after the delivery of the Yaqui hands (1922) the senior author, under arrangement with the Museum of the American Indian in New York, carried out his first expedition into the heart of Seriland. Although still intolerant of aliens and at times dangerous if aggravated, their depredations had been reduced to the occasional killing of a stray cow. The Seris had come to live a comparatively peaceful life under the supervision of Roberto Thomson of Hermosillo. It was through his efforts that the Seris were saved from complete extermination by the vaqueros of Sonora, and after having treated them for many years as a friend and adviser, he had made it feasible for a visitor to enter

[p.263(A)]

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
NU31 Seri NU31

114 their minds and to live among them without
648 undue fear of losing his life. Through the
kindness of Señor Thomson the senior author
[123] succeeded in making himself a friend of the
Seri and, enlarging upon this friendship
through long periods of living and traveling
among them, has acquired an intimate knowl-
edge of these strange people.

105 In 1922 the fishing industry of the Gulf of
178 California was not yet well developed, and it
was to be ten years before the village of Kino
should appear on the maps of the Sonora
coast. The Seris were still isolated in their
[161] desert domain and their numbers, then about
250, were maintaining themselves out of
reach of the infectious diseases of the white
man. The clan life had disappeared, and the
people lived as a single tribe with their old
chief, Juan Tomas, 90 years old at that time

[291]
[481]
[482]
[415]

FIG. 15. MOVING DAY AMONG THE SERIS
THESE BURDENS, BORNE FOR MANY MILES OVER ROCKS, THROUGH CACTUS AND DEEP SAND, CONTAIN UTENSILS FOR HOUSEKEEPING WHEREVER THE SERIS MAY STOP.

[p.263(B)]

[89]

Seri Social Structure (1)

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1. The material presented here was collected on a three-week visit to the Seri zone, the costs of which were defrayed by the I.N.A.H. [Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia], for the purpose of planning later investigations. It took place in January, 1952, in the company of Mr. Paul Finninger of M.C.M. [Mexico City College].

121 The permanent system of interacting influences that is presented among the Seri is of great scientific interest for its extreme characteristics of geographic isolation, environmental hostility, poverty, and the small size of the community.

131 The Seri occupy coastal territory in Sonora on the Gulf of California; formerly they covered a territory that toward the end of the 18th century, along the coast extended from Guaymas Bay, including it, to Punta Peñasco and, on the mainland, included the area in the vicinity of the present city of Hermosillo. They have been reduced little by little, now occupying only some isolated points on Cape Tepoca, Desemboque, and Tiburón Island, places from which, in spite of their inclemency, they are also being displaced.

●648 Until some 30 years ago, most of the contacts of the Seri with Western culture had been warlike, ferociously defending their skins from the attacks of the yori (Mexican) invaders. Their contacts with the natives have been with the Yaqui, Papago, and those of Santa Rosalía (crossing the gulf). It was not until about 20 years ago, when the establishment of fishing camps was initiated with mestizo capital, that a new orientation in the treatment of the Seri came into being. Existing side by side with them at present are various Mexicans who exploit the products of Seri fishing, and some scientific investigators, principally from the United States.

13 They form enclaves in the heart of Aridamerica, with its cactus, shrubs and grasses, without flowing water, and with abundant flying and, especially, marine fauna.

[89 cont.]

000 abundant flying and, especially, marine fauna.

For a modern technology, their region has great resources,
511 but for the culture of the Seri it is frankly inhospitable. The standard of living is exceedingly low, as is proclaimed by natives and foreigners and as is demonstrated by the illnesses and hunger that weaken the population.

[90] The Seri truly form part of our Western society, in
226 so far as they catch fish, with fishhooks and motorboats, to sell
439 in the markets of Hermosillo, Nogales, and Tucson, and they
[177] obtain payments in national specie and coin. The part that
182 they form, however, has its own internal structure, which regu-
lates the relations with the environment and among its mem-
[161] bers, even though a group of 218 persons, which suffers severe alterations in percentages from disasters like the sinking of a boat or strokes of good luck like the establishment of a prosperous fishing camp, is almost insignificant for the nation.

Most probably they have never been much more numerous, and they must not have had great cohesion in the past, a situation explicable in view of their nomadic gathering economy.
621 Toward the close of the 18th century they were divided into bands, of which it is known that the most important were the Guaymas, Upanguaymas, Tepocas, Tiburones, and Salineros.
● [648] They banded together at various times in order to defend themselves and to attack the nuclei of Mexicans of the zone, achieving combined action, but without effective political unity.

At present they seem to form a single group without marked
619 subdivisions, although they recognize affiliations like that of "Tiburones," "half-Papago," etc., which appear to have little real classificatory significance.

There is great uniformity: they speak a single language
184 incomprehensible to the rest of humanity; they have a relatively
619 uniform culture, and there is tribal unification for matters involving sexual exchange.

The most obvious relations are spatial; they have important
361 settlements that sprung up around the fishing establishments and are more or less permanently occupied. Of these, "El Desemboque," close to the mouth of a river from which they have been displaced, is the most important, with 80 per cent of the Seri

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

II

[P6A]

OUTLINE OF SERI CULTURE

Territory

131 Historically the Seri territory at its greatest expansion extended from the coast of Mar del Cortez to Hermosillo and from Porto Libertad to Guayamas and included also the Tiburon Island. 101 Ethnically, the Seris represented a collection of [197] dialectically distinct tribes, the Guyma, Tepoca, etc., perpetually at war with each other, whose common characteristic was their culture, and who were framed in to the north by the Pima Alto and Papago, to the west by the now extinct Cochimi, to the east by the Opata and Pima Bajo and to the south by the Cahita, Mayo and the Yaqui.

● 648 But their area had fluctuated much. After the 131 bitter and disastrous wars against the Mexicans from the late 18th century through most of the 19th, the Seris lost out and were forced by the Mexican government to settle on Tiburon. This incarceration did not last long. McGee had already in 1894 found them on the mainland and Kroeber found them equally divided between Tiburon and Kino. In 1930 when he visited, evidently they lived largely in Kino Bay. As the Mexicans pressed on Kino moving in, in ever greater numbers, and as Japanese fisheries worked the Gulf out of Desemboque attracting the fish-loving Seris, their main settlement has moved once more. About 1940 most of the Seris moved into Desemboque and at the time of my visit, almost all of them lived [361] there while only two families made Tiburon their "permanent" camp. School and availability of the medical facilities as well as the location of the Mexican traders in Desemboque, part of whose scheme the Indians have become, attracted the Seris. Only occasionally today they roam inland or visit other areas, either owing to the hunting or fishing expeditions.

Numbers

161 Seri numbers fluctuated as much as their territory and had suffered immense diminution. I shall list the estimates below, indicating the source of the information:

	Authority		Source
1780	Velasco	2,000	McGee
1824	Troncoso	1,000+	"
1826	Ratio (Tiburon only)	1,000-1,500	"
1826	Hardy	3,000-4,000	"
1841	de Mofras	1,500	"
1844	....	550	"
1846	Velasco	500	"
c.1855	Encinas	500-600	"
c.1865	"	250-300	"
1894	Mashem, native	250-350	"
1930	Thomson	175	Kroeber
1934	Mex. En. Cifras	160	Ethn. Synth. Mex.
1953	Smith, Jr.	248	MS. Univ. of Ariz.
1955	Malkin	236	Malkin

II

OUTLINE OF SERI CULTURE

161 At the moment their number should have increased again, after a disastrous epidemic in the 164 spring of 1955.

Biological Background

142 The Seris are somewhat atypical among the peoples of the general area in that they represent a very slender, sinewy, tall type. This is true of both men and women. This physical type in general is apt to be associated with the desert habitat and the Seris answer the requirements very well. As shall be seen, their economy also repre- 433 sents characteristic adaptation to the desert conditions of pre-agricultural people.

Economy

The Seris readily fell into the category of the pre-agricultural hunters and gatherers with one variant, dependence on the produce of the sea, whether marine turtles, fish or littoral invertebrates.

[241] Here the Seri provide another exception for the region. They are the only group that never had any agriculture. McGee has pointed out their lack of agricultural sense and this has also been mentioned by Kroeber and by incidental Mexican visitors. Of late years, some efforts have been made by the Mexican government and the American Friends' Service Committee to persuade them [648] toward agriculture, but to no avail. The Seris [464] occasionally hire out to the surrounding Mexican or American rancher-farmers but grow restless after a few days of cotton picking and retire, with their advanced pay lost to the employer. On the other hand, efforts to teach them related practices, well digging for example, also failed to interest them. To this day they remain much in the original pattern of economy.

262 McGee (1898:214) who had a chance to observe 114 them from the first hand and who also had access to valuable information from the outsiders gives the following figures for their diet:

land game, large and small (incl. stolen stock)	21%
waterfowl and eggs, incl. pelican	13
sea-turtles	25
fish	15
shellfish	10
cactus fruit	9
other plants	6
miscellaneous	2
total animal 84%	marine 65%

Kroeber (1930:20) questions these figures and thinks that shellfish represents greater percentage than McGee indicated. He also thinks the use of turtles had been exaggerated. He figures the dependence on the animal diet as 75% and on marine 60% but he suspects that these figures are too high for a band with ready access to countless cacti and mesquite.

[P.6B]

226 411 177 commercial origin are their main instruments of fishing. To this they added dynamite, sometimes with disastrous results to themselves, mostly as a way of securing bait. Single-pointed fish-spears which loomed so importantly in McGee's account have gone the way of the Dodo for its original purpose and transformed into iron bar lances, now used largely as weapons against rattlesnakes that men encounter in their desert roamings. However, in the forties, when the Seris spent a great deal of time getting sharks and huge rays, they killed them with these weapons.

226 411 What retain some importance are the harpoon and the two-pronged spear called "puiero." The two-pronged spear is one of their oldest weapons. The construction is much the same as when McGee visited them. The spear is used mainly to stab large-size fish, the giant *bais* or *mero* for example, after it has been brought up on the line. The [225] harpoon is now exclusively a weapon for the turtle hunt.

226 177 [157] An interesting fate met an effort to teach these Indians net fishing in 1947. They tried, ruined the nets and never took it up since. The instigators were Mexicans, the fish traders. I suspect that Seri individualism had a great deal to do with their lack of interest in net fishing which after all demands a certain amount of cooperation. With the hook and line fishing, men can have much more their own way.

501 177 ●648 An added "tool" of the Seris is the plank boat. The balsa which McGee still observed during his visit, had already vanished by the time Kroeber came to the Seriland and had been replaced by these boats. The boats are flat bottomed but good sized. The material was provided by the Mexican government. Boats are usually propelled by 5 hp. motors leased from the Mexicans (no Seri is rich enough to purchase [439] one) who also sell them gasoline and oil at exorbitant prices and in return buy Seris' catch of fish and sea turtle for low prices. At the time of my visits these amounted roughly to less than a peso [435] per kilo of the flayed, degutted and cleaned fish (less than 8 cents) with fluctuation up and down the scale depending on the kind of the fish, and to about 30-50 pesos for medium to large size "cahuama," the live marine turtle.

501 648 The Seri boats are also propelled by paddles and sail—this is always the case with the families who wish to stay away on Tiburon for some time. The Mexicans will not lease them their motors for such trips even if the Seri, some of them at least, have enough knowledge of the motors to repair minor stoppages—a demonstration of the fallacy [114] of McGee's idea that they are genetically unable to handle tools. In this respect, Kroeber's (1930: 25) estimate of them is closer to the truth.

462 Sexual division of labor in procuring food goes on, much the same as it had 70 and 30 years ago, with the sole exception of the imported goods. [439] Here purchases are made either by men or women or by children, depending on who at the time has the cash and what one wishes to buy.

Fishing is still done by men and so is hunting. Women still concentrate on gathering, whether of

[P.7 B]

quite possible but I couldn't substantiate the story from contemporary evidence. Perhaps during the height of the shark hunting for the liver oil, the Seris used the oil also for wood polish, although it isn't very clear just what sort of artifact they make would require such treatment. The wooden tools or artifacts among them are in short supply at all times. Finally, the huge horned manta was supposedly hunted also for its hide but just in what circumstances it was not explained. It is the only fish which the Seri ever mentioned as having been put to such use.

Fishing

As already mentioned, fishing nowadays is largely accompanied from flat-bottomed boats with hook and line. The old ways of getting fish by spearing are almost gone for good. Recently, an attempt has been made to teach the Seris siene fishing, but 10 years of these endeavors accomplished only ruination of a number of expensive nets and of much fishing gear and the desertion of the project by the Indians. It may be that their individualistic and almost anarchistic attitudes preclude cooperation, essential in this type of fishing.

The bait is obtained in any one of the three ways: by dynamiting fish in tide pools or along the shore, or by catching small fry with small hook and line, or finally by collecting small fishlets in the tide pools, prying them out from under rocks or simply—and here the Seri boys excel—by shooting them in the tide pools with tiny toy arrows or simply spearing them with a stick. The dynamiting is done with the purchased sticks of dynamite which the Seris obtain in the tiendas. The procedure is often risky and down right dangerous. Some of the Seris have blown themselves up with dynamite. I have seen one of them, who lost both arms and had a jaw broken during a dynamiting trial. He went about with a dirty rag tied up over his head to support the wrecked jaw-bone. He was carried off by measles two years later in the 1955 epidemic.

The Seris' commercial fishing is pretty much controlled and exploited by the two or three Mexican fish traders from Nogales and Hermosillo. These have their tiendas in Desemboque, which at set price sell things to the villagers. They also provide the Indians with the five horse-power motors for fishing trips and pleasure cruises and with the oil and gasoline essential to run these—also at set price. They finally purchase the fish—at a set price—and from the proceeds the Seris purchase goods at the tiendas, completing the cycle. Not all Seris are compelled to work for the Mexicans, and, in fact, they do not always do so. Some families stay away from Desemboque and depend on the sail and oars for propulsion. They come to the village only once every few months to obtain supplies. Even when in the village, the Seris make little effort to fish for more than they wish to get in order to satisfy their immediate needs.

Fishing expeditions usually take place in the morning. Most Seris will set off before daybreak and will return with the catch by 11 a.m. or noon.

ooo possible for producing domestic crops of any kind. There is no water
312 for irrigation, and drinking water is very scarce, rising in only a few parts of the Island in places known only to the Indians.

• 648 For centuries these nomads of the wastes have borne an evil repu-
[10] tation as killers and cannibals, and many an expedition to the Island for trade or exploration has never left its beautiful shores. Lured away from their boats by friendly gestures of the Indians, every last man has been killed by arrow or rifle and the expedition never heard from. No survivor has ever returned to relate his experience and, up to the time of my visit, a man risked his life to go among the Seris on their Island.

Time after time, for four hundred years, the Spaniards, and later the Mexicans, have tried to exterminate them. They have been ambushed, hunted, killed on sight for years; diseases have decimated them: they have been the Ishmaelites among the native tribes of Mexico, with every man's hand against them. Now only a small remnant survives.

[13] They have also taken heavy toll of those who have invaded their territory, which at one time extended from Altar on the north to Guaymas on the south, and from Hermosillo to the coast. When hard pressed, they retired to their Island sanctuary where, deep in the rugged ranges, they have defied pursuit. They are strong, brave, neither asking nor giving quarter in battle---men of marvelous endurance, tireless walkers, swift runners, wonderful trackers.

Within the last few years the Government has definitely set aside Tiburon as their exclusive home and sanctuary, with a strip along the mainland as their hunting and fishing ground, and where they can harvest the fruits of the giant cacti without fear of being killed. No person is allowed on this Island without special permission from the Governor of Sonora, or their Superintendent and devoted friend, Roberto Thomson. The Government has declared a permanent closed season on Seris.

175 As to the reputation of these nomads of the wastes of being can-
648 nibals, I quote the following extract from the *Life of Bill Fain:*
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After I had been in Yuma some time, a Yuma school teacher asked what I knew about Tiburon Island and the Seris. He said he had heard there was gold on the Island and he in company with a sailor intended to go down there. I said "Partner, I have been at the head of the Gulf several times, and interviewed many Mexican sailors and fishermen. These Seris are murderers and cannibals and my advice is, don't go, for as sure as God made little apples, you and your friend will make a fine feast for the *Tiburones.*"

He said the sailor would manage the boat and they would prospect on the Island and pack the gold out. And besides, they were going unarmed and trust themselves to the tender mercies of the most treacherous Indians in North America. I told him, "My advice is to stay just as far away from that Island as you can, if you want to teach school any longer." My advice was thrown away.

Some weeks later several mining men in skirting the coast opposite Tiburon, came across a place where the Seris had evidently been feasting on human flesh,

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near the narrow channel called *Infernillo*. They knew about the missing school teacher and sailor and without doubt this was the place where they had been eaten. There were the bones of two human beings, and there seemed to be a sort of cross, with hands severed at the wrists, nailed to the ends of the cross with big spikes, with a piece of leather, about as big as a dollar, to keep the nails from pulling through. The hands were from a white man, and many scattered papers from a valise near by, with the man's name stamped on it, was ample proof that the remains were those of the Yuma teacher and this sailor friend. The holes cut out of the valise fitted the leather washers. Even the bones were broken to extract the marrow. The teacher never showed up and everything happened just as I predicted. This was about 1893.

About a year after this, five other men left Yuma in a boat, called the *Examiner*, for Tiburon. Clark was an old frontiersman, O'Brien was a good man too, but not so old at the game; Charley Cowles was a mining man and the two *Examiner* reporters wanted to write up the Seris and the Island and hunt deer. All were fully armed. I gave Clark and O'Brien the same advice as I gave the school master and said on no account to all desert the boat; for O'Brien to make some excuse and stay in the large boat with a shot gun loaded with buckshot and land the reporters with the small skiff. I told Clark not to land but to stay in the skiff. I said they were all flying in the face of sure death once they landed. Charley disembarked at the mouth of a river and left for the interior.

When the boat got close to the Island, it was anchored according to my instructions and Clark and the reporters got in the skiff and were rowed close to shore, when the reporters jumped out and waded. Twelve or fifteen wild natives had emerged from the brush and were making signs of friendship and they shook hands all around with the reporters. One of the men could talk Spanish and he asked about deer and one of the Indians pointed to the mountains of the interior and said, "*Si Senor, bastante venado.*" So they all started inland and were soon concealed by the brush.

Of course, even two men fully armed and good gun men, would stand no chance with that number of wild natives.

Soon after they had disappeared around the point of a hill, the men in the boats heard the crack of a gun, followed by the scream of a man in mortal anguish. The men never showed up and Clark started for the big boat in his skiff. About this time, a great buck Indian started out in a dugout canoe to cut him off. O'Brien had kept himself concealed until the Indian came within range, when he raised up and threatened to shoot, and waved him back.

He went back all right, and as soon as Clark came aboard, they raised the anchor and sailed south to Guaymas, sold the boat and returned by train. They gave me the details as here recorded. Friends of the newspapermen took the matter up with the authorities at Washington and they had some diplomatic exchanges with the Mexican Government. Mexico answered: "If you don't want your Americans killed, keep them away from Tiburon."

[*Life of Bill Fain*, unpublished manuscript from the Davis collection.]

About 1893 George Porter and John Johnson fitted out the small sloop *World* in San Diego, to go down in the Gulf for shells and curios, and trade with the Seris. They came to grief in the same way. The men were lured ashore by the friendly attitude of the natives, led up the beach, then retreat cut off and they were shot down and "eaten by the Seris."

Dr. [W J] McGee of the Smithsonian Institute of Washington, in 1895, visited the Island with a party of scientists to study the

[text continues on p. 146]

175 Indians. Dr. McGee, confirming Bill Fain's story of the disappearance
• 698 of Robinson and Logan, the San Francisco newspapermen, secured the
266 facts from a Seri who spoke Spanish, as follows:

> On reaching the Island, Robinson and Logan asked the natives if there were any deer to be shot and receiving an affirmative reply, they started for the interior toward the mountain with several Seris as escort, leaving the two other men with the boats. On the face of it, this was a most foolhardy performance and Robinson actually loaned his rifle to one of the Seris, who accompanied him. The Seri shot Logan in the back and wounded Robinson who called for help. In trying to escape he stumbled and fell and the Indians beat his brains out with rocks.

On the Gulf Coast, this list of killed and of course eaten, could be greatly enlarged and leads to the fact that, up to recent years, no stranger---American, Mexican or Indian---could land on Tiburon and live. Ever since Sonora was settled, two or three hundred years ago, the Island has borne a sinister reputation and up to recent years, it has lived up to its reputation. Even now, no one is allowed to land on the Island without permission of the Governor or the Superintendent.

[188] The Island of Tiburon is isolated, its approaches guarded by deserts and sea, and its people the wildest and most primitive race in North America---every man's hand against them, and they against every body.

175 Dr. McGee's investigations in 1895 failed to convict the Seris of
698 cannibalism or of eating any part of either whites or Indians, killed
266 on the Island or killed in battle. This reputation of cannibalism is
114 prevalent in Mexico as well as in the United States, but the charge has never been proven.

It is true, they eat the flesh of animals raw as well as partially cooked, and that may have given rise to this gruesome reputation, but my own investigations covering several visits on the Island and on the Sonoran coast, failed to convince me that they had eaten human flesh. They told me themselves they had not, and if all reports of cannibalism by the Seris were traced back to their source, they would end in surmise or guesswork. No one, so far as I have been able to find, has actually seen a Seri eat human flesh. Until such a witness can be produced, the Seri remains unconvicted.

Let us examine the so-called evidence of the mining men, as quoted by Bill Fain: the finding of a white man's hands spiked to a cross, and the schoolmaster's papers scattered on the Gulf Coast of Sonora. This evidence is too circumstantial. The discs of leather even fitted the holes in the bag.

In the first place, nails are scarce in Sonora, and no Seri at that time would risk his life to procure nails or spikes at any ranch. Nearly all woods in that region are hard and would almost certainly turn a nail. The Seris had no axes to chop trees to make crosses, and

175 if they were as hungry then as they are today, they would not stop to
648 spike a man up preparatory to serving him. Their only tools then were
286 rocks to use as hammers and hoop iron for knives, and these are in
114 universal use today.
[412]

There is no doubt that the men were killed, but I think these mining men purposely exaggerated their findings, if any.

648 There is no doubt that the Seris were brave fighters, treacherous
721 murderers, sparing neither men, women or children on their raids,
727 killing ruthlessly. But there is one charge which cannot be brought against them, which cannot be said of many tribes north of the border. So far as I could find out, they never tortured nor scalped.

648 The Seris never took prisoners and they never inter-married with
721 other tribes, so their strain is pure.

727 There was one exception. Sixty or seventy years ago, the Seri
583 Chief Coyote Iguana and his band of warriors held up the stage between Hermosillo and Guaymas, and killed all except a handsome Spanish girl of the better class. This girl, Coyote Iguana made his wife and by her raised a family. One granddaughter still survived in 1924, and while more attractive than the general run of Seri, her complexion was fully as dark.

404 The Seris, Ishmaelites among the native tribes of Mexico---the most fascinating Indians in North America!

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123 *Reception Committee, Tiburon Island - 1935*

115 On the twenty-fifth of April, nineteen twenty-two, I engaged the services of Roberto Thompson, who with his father and grandfather

[text continues on p. 149]

123 rancheria of about ten or fifteen huts, half tumbled down, all facing
361 the sea and surrounded by turtle shells and deer bones, and sea shells. Things were dropped wherever they ate. This rancheria was deserted also.

We set sail again and landed on a sandy beach near another deserted rancheria called *Palo Fierro*. We hauled the boat way up and took out all our things and carried them up to the huts. In this place there were twenty-one huts---sometimes three built together. Many of them were in a good state of preservation. They were all in a long row with bleaching bones and turtle shells on all sides. From the inside of one hut I counted thirteen turtle shells around the base. There must have been about a hundred turtle shells here, and a few land tortoises.

123 There were two or three fragments of painted parts of a boat---
[648] probably remains of a boat belonging to seven fishermen who got drunk and landed here, and were all killed by the Seris two years ago. Six months ago a single Seri was captured by some Mexican fishermen and killed in reprisal.

As the wind increased it kicked up an ugly sea and we decided to camp over night. As we were reduced to about six gallons of water, Roberto suggested we take two empty five-gallon cans and go for water. I had offered to stay with the boat but was told the Seris would kill me if they found me alone.

[312] A Seri had told Roberto to follow a certain trail from the rancheria and go between the mountains and he would find a *pozo*, or well, not far away. Ricardo left his private sign and the five of us marched away, following a well-worn trail. For the full distance broken shards of ollas lined the trail at short distances, so we knew we were on
137 the right trail. Brush began at the sea shore and we passed various
123 kinds of desert vegetation---several kinds of cactus, especially the *sarbueso*. This starts with a single great trunk two or three feet in diameter, and then branches out like a vase, running up fifteen to twenty or more great columns like the *saguaro*. They were thirty or forty feet high. In some of these were piled a great accumulation of sticks and trash ten feet high or more, and on the top where the sea eagle makes its nest. There were a number of these.

Then we came to the *pitahalla*, *cholla*, *ocotillo*, and others, and the strange *terote* tree. This tree is the *Bursura Microphylla*, and has an odor like turpentine. It is a fat, dropsical tree like stuffed sausage, with crooked ungainly branches coming out at all angles. There are three varieties---the *terote colorado*, *blanco*, and *negro*, according to the color of the cut bark. Another strange tree was the *palo blanco*. Then there was the *palo verde*, *palo fierro* and *mesquite*. The *mesquite* was rare.

123 A number of signs were marked in the sand. We could not translate
[212] them. We walked single file, rifles in hand, and revolvers handy.

[text continues on p. 155]

123 nets of twisted fiber, hooked the nets in the ends of the notched
312 stick and started off nine or ten miles to the water hole in the heart
[402] of the mountains.

Water carried so far over loose, sandy soil, dodging cactus, threading a devious way among the *talus* thrown off the cliffs and slopes of canyon walls, with the water-bearer barefoot, acquires a value absolutely unknown to the man who draws an unlimited supply from a faucet.

The two men were gone six hours and when they returned they were almost staggering under the heavy loads of water, each man carrying at least one hundred and ten pounds of water, as the cans were full. In addition, one man had a canteen full.

The thirsty people drank sparingly, and a little Seri maid poured some of the precious liquid into a cooking olla for a thirsty dog. After the dog had lapped sufficient to allay his thirst, she carefully poured the residue back into the can, never losing a drop. One drop of water could not be spared after that arduous trip.

484 Bob says a man goes to Hermosillo occasionally and returns to the
147 coast, ninety miles, with two to five cans of *mescal*. It takes probably
• 648 four days to do it, but it is a wonderful feat of endurance. He said about thirty years ago a woman walked the ninety miles during one night, afoot, and reported to the Government House when it was opened at nine in the morning that about fifty of her people had been shot by Roberto's uncle at various times. This uncle was a very hard rough man and the Seris were fond of his mares and steers for meat, and used to steal, so he began shooting a goodly number. Fearing a man messenger would be shot, as men were frequently shot while going along the road, they sent a woman.

Ysabel was Governor at the time. Judgment was rendered against the uncle, and it is probable that a hanging squad would have been sent out to execute him. The Governor, a great friend of the family, sent for him, and he rode ninety miles at night on horseback and was saved with the Governor's help.

Roberto saw twelve Seris pack meat from two mares, two steers and two yearling heifers, for four or five miles to their boats. Their endurance and strength is phenomenal. The question naturally arises, "Why are not burros used by the Seris on the Island to ride and pack,
[402] as they are by their Mexican neighbors on the mainland?" It has been tried, but things were reversed; the Seris packed the burros around in their stomachs.

261 Roberto said: "These people, living on the verge of starvation,
262 never having a continuous food supply, would kill and eat every burro, and it is a common thing on the mainland, if a cow or horse dies, and Seris are in the neighborhood, they will try to beat the buzzards to it. They will gorge in times of plenty, and when food is scarce they

[text continues on p. 160]

262 Burro meat comes first in their estimation, then mares, then steers, but they take what they can get and no questions asked. Burro deer or black tail is a great article of diet, and these deer are on the Island. Wolves and coyotes are on the Island also. I do not think they eat them.

266 As I have said, the Seris are reputed to be cannibals, or to have been. Since those who furnished the meals cannot speak, it is a matter not entirely proven.

• 648 177 There is a war on between Mexican fishermen and the Seris. The Seris are wild for boats and will do almost anything to get one, so two years ago a chance occurred and they killed seven drunken Mexican fishermen and seized their boat. Last summer, some fishermen surprised the Seris, killed one, and recovered the boat. They mourn this boat a lot more than they do the dead man.

648 Twenty or thirty years ago, Governor Ysabel came here with some troops to capture some Yaquis who had joined the Seris. The Governor told the Chief he would have to give up the Yaquis, as they were outlaws. The next day the Seris brought in six right hands. They said they had killed the Yaquis. Asked how and why, they said they had killed them while they slept and they wanted their guns. They cut off the right hand of each as proof.

With all their apparent friendship, we never go without arms. When we sleep our rifles are alongside of us, and we wear our revolvers with us. Sometimes we roll in with our clothes on. But they have never, by sign or act, shown anything but friendship.

851 123 177 A baby boy about four months old was in camp, so Rafael Ysabel baptized him and gave his name Rafael, and presented him with a little gold cross of which his mother was very proud. She held the baby while he poured a little precious fresh water over its head and repeated:

"In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I name thee Rafael. . ."

123 Curious black eyes follow us always. When we eat, the Seris often squat around us and watch every mouthful. If there is any bread, gravy, grease, beans or meat left over, we pass it on and they certainly clean up.

While we eat, the waves are always lapping on the shore upon which many pretty shells are thrown by the tide, besides water-worn pumice stone in all sizes down to a small marble.

Our meals are very simple. We bake biscuit in the dutch oven for every meal, cook turtle meat, if we have it, or beans or rice or spuds.

[text continues on p. 171]

five-gallon cans full. They were fastened one each end of a *palanca*, or shoulder pole, and thus brought to camp. If anyone thinks this is easy they should try it over rocky, uneven, sandy, stony ground, dodging thorny vegetation at every step. 123

The colors of the mountains were mostly red of volcanic character, with great streaks of yellow and pink, deeply cut with side canyons and sharp ridges, all similar to other desert ranges. [133]

The men caught a few crabs and gathered clams in the afternoon, which helped out our larder. One of them told about his wife being shot. He said they had a big fiesta and during the drunk, a Seri shot at his head. He happened to be stooping alongside his wife and the bullet buried itself in his wife's thigh. We could feel it through her clothes.

A good many years ago when stages ran between Nogales and Guaymas, the Seris held up the stage, killed the men and captured one Mexican girl. She was brought here and made the wife of one of the chiefs, Coyote Iguana, and she bore children. Some years later her brothers came here to induce her to return, but she refused, saying that she was ashamed to go back and she had children here. About fifteen years ago in a battle with the Papagos, two of her sons were killed. 648 727 563

The Papagos have taken toll of many Seris, these hunted Indians who are such fascinating and ingenious companions, whether they are harpooning turtle or packing water through the thorny wastes. 648

372 516 291

Seris making fire (with fire drill) - Island of Tiburon

123 [202] It was a beautiful morning in early May, and the water was still as a pond, reflecting all the sunrise tints like a mirror. After a breakfast of clams and broth, bread and sand and bronco tea, we made a big smoke and were answered by a similar smoke two miles off, so we knew our friends were on the way.

123 482 [415] In one hour they began trailing in, the women each with a load on her head, walking graceful and erect. On one head was an inverted turtle shell containing nearly all the family belongings done up in rags. On the top was the most precious belonging of all---the rifle. The man carried two or three ollas and other things on a shoulder stick. Everything necessary for their home was carried on their heads.

123 Soon the Indian Blanco was seen paddling in his *balsa;* he also had a load and had paddled all the way from Ironwood camp against wind and sometimes tide. As they were all very thirsty we gave them water around. They immediately went to the shore as it was low tide, and began gathering small oysters from the rocks. Soon each woman returned with a half bushel of them on her head.

About three o'clock and for an hour or so thereafter, Antonio Herrera, the Chief's son Chico, the old Chief Juan Tomas, two other men and one woman, came drifting into camp with their dogs. Each one was loaded with things. They were a pretty wild looking bunch. There was very little food and little water for so many.

• 648 731 The Chief said that a day or two before, some of his men had a fight with some sailors (Mexicans) on the Island of San Estevan four or five miles off the south west corner of Tiburon. Nobody was killed, but the two boats, the wealth of the Island, had drifted away and were lost, leaving eight men marooned on the Island. They had gone there to gather *mescal* to make drink to celebrate a wedding to come off soon. Three men were five days without water. They sent up frantic smoke signals every day. At last they were seen, and help went for them in the only remaining boat on the Island. They were rescued.

648 484 123 The Chief and his men and women, with us, are going to Hermosillo ninety miles afoot with all their belongings to ask the Government for food and help.

142 [222] The Chief looks to be seventy years old, a grim dark-skinned individual with a thin fringe of hair on his upper lip, broad nose, wide nostrils, small black eyes. He is well-built and erect. None of these that I have seen so far have any fat. They are lean and sinewy. [302] The young men are of large build, high cheek bones, some with hair on [291] their lips, their long black hair braided; sometimes with a strand of red worsted. All were either barefooted or wore sandals. I saw one pair of sandals made out of turtle hide; another of burro hide.

648 123 When the Chief arrived, the sail of a vessel was seen over the beach. Bob recognized it as belonging to a launch of a Yaqui Indian

[text continues on p. 180]

• 648 123 friend of his from Guaymas, although only the upper part of the sail was visible. This greatly frightened the women who began packing to escape to the interior. They thought they were friends of ours and it was a plan to have them land. Bob proposed to go out and meet them, and if possible get provisions. With the Chief and two other Seris, Bob and his brother, leaving the firearms behind, hoisted the sail and headed for the mouth of the bay.

When they reached the Infernillo the sloop veered away, its crew being afraid of being killed by the Seri. There were six men and boys and they mustered all the rifles and stood ready to fight. They had just had trouble three days before at San Estevan. At last the wind veered and they had to stop and Bob waved his cap. Finally they got close enough to talk, and then came on board and secured some provisions---a little coffee, sugar, fresh onions, tomatoes and rice, and a little flour for the Chief. They had a fair wind back and returned about dusk.

123 At night everybody was happy. I had gathered two pails of oysters that are exposed on the rocks at low tide and I had built a fire over them so they would open readily, and then had cut them out. We made a sort of stew then, enough to go around the crowd.

123 534 [515] After supper the Indians gave a dance, a very weird affair. I have seen nearly all the musical instruments used by the Indians of the Southwest and Mexico in their ceremonial dances, but the Seris were the first tribe I had ever seen use the bow and arrow as a musical instrument. A six-foot bow with a tightly stretched bowstring of twisted sinew was held, back down, on two inverted bowl baskets by one of three men, all of whom struck the string with arrows. This [533] emitted a musical baritone note like the vibration of a piano wire, in perfect rhythm to the weird chanting of the three musicians, singing a wild plaintive air.

535 123 The dancer, Manuel Encina, a grim old boy, facing the orchestra, mounted the back of a turtle shell resting over a hollow in the sand, as a resonator, with a long staff held in his right hand to steady him, and gave one of the prettiest exhibitions of the double shuffle on the rounded top of an oily old turtle shell that I have ever seen. At the end of each canto there was a rest, and then they went at it again. This lasted two hours, and was lighted by a feeble camp fire and moon and was danced on the shore.

123 Before daybreak the following morning we arose, loaded the boat, and then the Indians brought a lot of things, besides three or four rifles. Then two young Indians jumped in. We were so crowded that we could not move. The two Indians and two of our men used paddles as we were too crowded to row. There were seven men besides all the junk, and the boat was so loaded and so cranky there was imminent danger of capsizing. At the least movement she would dip to the edge of her

"I'll take a piece of leg," the other would answer.

A chunk of living flesh would be cut out and piece by piece the captive was hacked to pieces.

Only two or three years ago Bob and two friends had trouble. Bob escaped by a very narrow margin, but they tracked him like hounds for twelve miles. His friends were captured and stripped of clothes and everything, and expected every moment to be shot. They caught a hog, hung it up alive and cut a long strip off the back and left it hanging. They got frightened away suddenly and left the two friends unharmed. His uncle was captured on his way to Royon, on the San Miguel River twenty miles south of Opodepe.

648 The Yaquis and the Seri Indians have been enemies for untold years. What grim scenes the eyes of the desert have witnessed in the past!

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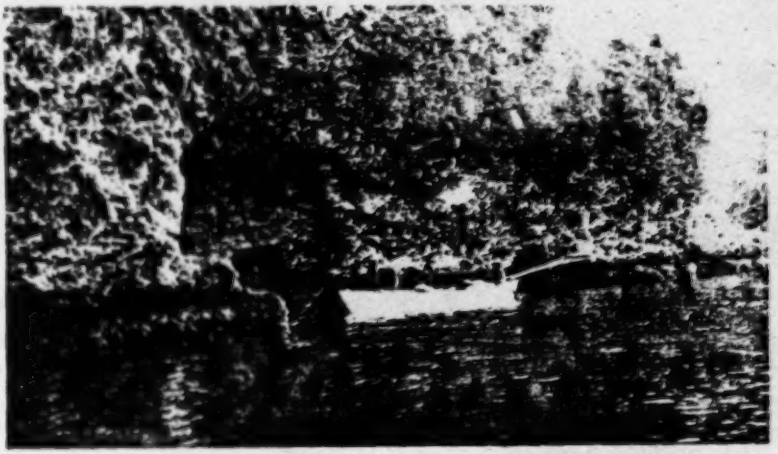

Entering cave - Tiburon - 1936

123 One night when the sea was quiet Bob and his brother went sea turtle hunting but didn't catch any. We made a bright fire of drift to guide them back. The sea murmured gently, accompanying the crackle of the fire.

We turned in on-shore in the clean white sand. We roasted the turtle breast that the Seris gave us, by standing it on edge in front of the fire. It was tender and elegant. For bread we made pancakes, mixed with sea water. We were out of baking powder. The green coffee secured from the Yaqui fishermen was wasted in a frying pan until it

123 but nothing happened.

123 622 [115] We reached Hermosillo at three in the afternoon, and as we landed Roberto and Sara met us, and Roberto embraced me. Then the Seri Indian Chief rushed up and fairly hugged me in his joy at seeing me again. A timid wild-looking Seri boy, of fifteen years of age, shyly shook hands with the *Americano*, while all the Mexican men and women, fully one hundred in number, looked on open-mouthed and wide-eyed, to see the Chief of the wildest and lowest of savage Indians in North America, rush up and embrace a white man.

We all climbed into Roberto's auto-truck, and my things were brought to Hotel Cohen, and then we all went to Roberto's home and stayed all the afternoon. He had just returned from the coast the day before, and Juan Tomas was determined to come also and greet me, and the boy---a nephew---hung on to the Chief, and finally Roberto said he would have to return on foot if he brought him. Juan Tomas said that made no difference. He would walk to the coast eighty or ninety miles, if only he could come.

[291] [302] He was probably seventy-five years old. He wore a hat, but his hair was straggly and he had a slight moustache. He wore shirt and trousers and a dirty kilt---remanent of the Pelican-skin-kilt---around his waist, and he was barefooted. The boy had a not unpleasant face, long wild hair, shirt, pants, and a cotton kilt reached to his knees. He, too, was barefooted.

I gave the Chief a knife, and the boy a red crayon and fifty cents. With the crayon he made a V on his kilt. He was very shy and always kept in a shadow, or in the background, and he spoke no Spanish although he knew the Spanish alphabet.

Sara showed some photographs and postcards in a baloptican in a dark room, and among them were pictures of some Seris and myself. These created much excitement with the Chief and the boy, and they jabbered together in the Seri language with animation. They recognized some of the subjects, their own people.

584 622 648 123 Juan Tomas is to be married soon to an elderly Seri dame, and we have been invited to attend the fiesta. He has been laying in the trousseau for the bride, and several gallons of mescal. A steer or burro will have to be provided, and all the fixin's and nothing will be left undone to make a very festive occasion. When asked to show us his gifts he reluctantly brought forth a package which he carefully unwrapped and disclosed eighteen yards of *manta*, two red pieces and one pink piece of Calico, some red handkerchiefs, and one box for painting the face. He carefully wrapped these up again and put them in the room set apart for him and the boy.

[508] [509] The woman he is to marry has no male relatives from whom she can be bought, so the Chief appointed a man and created him Uncle *pro-tempore*, and to him the Chief is going to give a rifle and a blanket as the purchase price. Pretty high!

642 621 618 714 [186] [406]

The third specification states that a kin group, to constitute a clan, must exhibit actual social integration. Murdock stresses the necessity of observing a positive group sentiment, such as would be manifested by organized collective activities or group functions, before the group can be characterized as a clan. An essential feature of this group sentiment is the inclusion of the wife as an integral member of her husband's kin group.

621 618 [628] [622] [701] [583] [406]

This sort of social integration was indeed exhibited by the Seri kin group of each subdivision. It was, in fact, fostered by the isolation brought about by the inhabitants' reservation of hunting and fishing rights for themselves. Tension existed between certain subdivisions and, since there was no chief, the oldest capable male organized and led the fighting force of the clan. In times of need, the members of the group united to give mutual assistance. The groom-to-be could expect material aid from his fellow clan members in the payment of the bride price. Mutual assistance was given in the fulfillment of puberty ceremony and burial obligations. The men cooperated in their hunting and fishing expeditions. The women of the clan, including the in-married spouses, cooperated in the gathering and sharing of food. Everyone could attend the various fiestas. It is said that in the performance of these collective activities, close harmony generally prevailed.

BAND INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

642 619 578 [648]

The division of the Seri tribe into bands was likely brought about through internal strife. During the period of band history known to the present-day Seri,[8] however, serious skirmishes seem to have been fought predominantly with non-Seri groups.[9]

BAND I

642 621 628 578 [721] [648]

Band I internal relations appear to have been relatively peaceful. The inhabitants of subdivisions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were fishermen as well as hunters and gatherers, whereas the people of subdivision 6 preferred to subsist on gathered food and wild game. Also, the members of Band I robbed cattle and horses, which pursuit brought reprisals from the Mexican ranchers. There was apparently considerable social intercourse among the six subdivisions, even to the extent that hunting rights of one were sometimes granted to inhabitants of a neighboring section.

Trouble developed when some members of Band I speared fish within the domain of Band V. Here also bitter fighting broke out, and any semblance of peaceful co-existence between the two groups was destroyed.

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Except for the occurrence of several battles, relations between Bands I and III were peaceful.

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Relations with non-Seri groups were not always peaceful. For many years the members of Band I were on friendly terms with the Papago; they often camped together and even intermarried. Due to a misunderstanding,[10] fighting erupted between the two groups and many people were killed in the years which followed.

BAND II

The external relations of Band II were decidedly turbulent. Although their primary base of operations was a coastal area, the people did not use the ocean as a source of food. They preferred beef and horse meat which was easily acquired by stealing animals from ranches. Here again the wrath of the ranchers and the government was incurred.

[262]
[721]

A small group of Yaqui eventually joined Band II and intermarried with them. The Seri claim that the Yaqui induced the warriors of this band to assault travelers on the road between Hermosillo and Guaymas. Coyote Iguana, who according to Seri tradition captured Lola Casanova, was of this band. This activity soon brought retribution from the government. Later, dissension arose between these Seri and the Yaqui.

[582]

The enmity and strife that occurred between Bands II and V were mentioned above.

BAND III

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The history of the internal relations of this band on Tiburon Island seems to have been marked by periods of violence. Battles between subdivisions sometimes occurred; however, they were usually short-lived and soon forgotten. A major struggle once occurred when a shaman named *ʔapetla* "the invincible one" and warriors from subdivision 4 made repeated raids upon the neighboring subdivisions and killed many. Eventually, his enemies overcame their fear and destroyed the killer.

[721]

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Although the inhabitants of Band III were hunters, gatherers, and fishermen, they began to rob cattle once they became established on the mainland. They too incurred the wrath of ranchers and the government.

BAND IV

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Since the members of this band were, by choice, inhabiting an inland area of Tiburon Island, they lived in relative isolation as hunters and gatherers. Their primary contacts were with members of Band III with whom they intermarried.

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[582]

Band V

642 [226] [501] [721] These people were apparently hunters, gatherers, and fishermen. It is said that they speared fish from the shore since they did not use *balsas*. They too apparently raided the ranches. Their warring nature has already been discussed; it resulted in the [582] [628] acquisition of few friends. However, several marriages between members of this band and members of subdivision 2 of Band III are said to have occurred.

Band VI

[131] [342] [501] [411] [262] The members of Band VI lived on San Esteban Island and were the most primitive of the tribe. They lived in huts made of driftwood and in caves and made extensive use of the *balsa*. Although they did not have the bow and arrow, they did become expert in the use of the spear. The people depended mainly on a seafood, iguana, and maguey diet.

621 628 578 [157] Perhaps it was due to the confined living space on the small island with the accompanying lack of fresh water that relations between the four subdivisions were precarious and fights broke out frequently. The Seri today stress the fact that the members of this band were impetuous and unpredictable.

642 [574] [628] Their relations with the other bands were generally good however. Seri from Band III were free to visit San Esteban where they were well treated.

[484] [191] [648] The San Esteban people seldom traveled to the mainland, and, since they spoke no Spanish, it is probable that they made no peaceful contact with non-Seri groups.

COLLAPSE OF THE BAND SYSTEM

642 628 578 648 Internal strife in the Seri tribe was probably a major factor in the establishment of the band system. External strife was a major factor in its downfall.

[721] Reference has been made to the plundering, killings and rustling of cattle to which certain of the bands were dedicated. The concern of the Sonora government was aroused, and steps were taken to crush the rebellious groups. According to the present-day Seri, military action by army units and rancher outfits against the various bands resulted in the near-destruction of the whole tribe.[11]

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BAND V

It was stated above that this band fought with Band II and then with Band I. Since Band V was likely killing cattle, they also may have been harassed by soldiers. Eventually Band V abandoned its territory near Punta Tepopa and headed south along the coast to a camp near present-day Bahia Kino. From this camp the entire group disappeared and was never seen again by members of the other bands. The Seri of today believe that Band V either traveled inland or was destroyed by a non-Seri force.

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BAND II

These people were rustlers and marauders. Government intervention in the situation was inevitable. The Seri recount the following final encounter between this group and the government forces.

The entire remaining membership of Band II was hiding out in a nearly inaccessible swamp thicket at Bahia Kino. Knowing that an armed force of soldiers and ranchers was searching for them, the people left their camp to seek safety elsewhere. Almost immediately they were attacked by the superior armed force which proceeded to wipe out the whole group. A youth who had avoided capture is said to have reported the affair to the Seri on Tiburon Island. This event may have occurred during the Encinas Wars fought from 1855 to 1865.

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BAND VI

The members of this band on San Esteban Island were little interested in the mainland and did not participate in the raids on man and livestock there. Nevertheless, they were to share in the severe punishment meted out to the bands guilty of multitudinous depredations.

Sometime after the massacre of Band II, a ship arrived at San Esteban, and many of the people were induced to go aboard. The rest of the inhabitants followed the ship to a camp on the eastern side of Tiburon Island where they were to receive gifts. As the people congregated, they were herded into a stone corral. Apparently, some of the San Esteban men were killed at this time. The rest of them, along with the women and children, were taken to Santa Rosa point on the mainland. Here, the Seri say, more of the men were killed. The remaining men were strung together by wire and led away, never to return.

The San Esteban women and children, along with some Tiburon Island women and children (of Band III), were taken in

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the vessel to Guaymas. With the aid of a group of Yaqui, some of these women were said to have been permitted to go to Hermosillo and eventually to return to their home on Tiburon. Others of their group are said to have remained near Guaymas. The women who returned to Tiburon reported that the San Esteban women and children were put aboard another ship which sailed southward.

BANDS I, III, AND IV

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As opposition from the Papago and government forces increased, the members of Band I were forced to seek refuge on Tiburon Island. The mainland members of Band III (subdivisions 11 and 12) were also forced, especially during the Encinas Wars, to flee to Tiburon. There the combined forces of Bands I, III, and IV sought to cope with the military expeditions sent out through the years to exterminate them. Tiburon Island is an adverse battlefield for the uninitiated; some expeditions were turned back due to lack of potable water or because of failure to make contact with the enemy in the mountainous terrain. Some expeditions did encounter the Seri, however, and many natives were either killed or captured.

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Through the years, then, these military encounters, along with smallpox and measles epidemics, were responsible for reducing the Seri tribe to a small remnant. The band and clan systems lost their functional relevance as the people continued to live together for mutual protection. Shortly after the turn of the century, the expeditions and raids had practically ceased.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF BANDS TODAY

With the dissolution of the band system, the rule of descent shifted from patrilineal to bilateral, and the rule of residence shifted from patrilocal to neolocal.

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Although the substance of the band system is no longer a reality, the concept of land ownership still remains. A young Seri of today may choose to be associated with either the *i?iziiting* of his father or that of his mother. He is said to inherit part ownership of the area. It is recalled by one informant that in former times ownership of a mountain was especially important. Sometimes ownership of a mountain was included as part payment for a bride. Thus a person might 'own' a mountain in a subdivision other than his own.

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A custom exists even today whereby a person names his dog after a mountain or other geographical point located in his subdivision. Although the person may re-use the name, each dog so named must be of the same sex as the first.

so named must be of the same sex as the first. The significance of land ownership needs further investigation.

Many of the Seri still prefer, when possible, to live in their chosen band area. Sometimes a person, when he is approaching death, will ask to be taken to his own i?iziitng, where he can die and be buried in the area of his choice.

NOTES

1. Due to printing limitations, stress on Seri words has been omitted, and several orthographic symbol changes have been made for this paper. The phonetic values of the symbols used are the following: p is voiceless labial stop; t is vl. dental stop; k is vl. velar stop; ? is glottal stop; f is vl. labial flat spirant; w is vl. labial grooved-rounded spirant; s is vl. alveolar spirant; z is vl. alveo-palatal spirant; l is vl. lateral spirant; h is vl. velar spirant; x is vl. back velar spirant; m is labial nasal; n is dental nasal; ng is velar nasal; y is palatal semivowel; i is a high close front vowel; e is a low close front vowel; a is a low open central vowel; o is a mid close back vowel.

2. These data were compiled during field trips to the Seri camps during the years 1956-61, the studies being carried out under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The principal informant was R. Herrera T. whose information was checked with and supplemented by nine of the older members of the tribe. I am indebted to my colleague, David Thomas, who read an earlier draft of this paper and made helpful suggestions.

3. 1) W. J. McGee, "The Seri Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, No. 17, Part 1. Washington, 1898. 2) A. L. Kroeber, "The Seri," *Southwest Museum Papers*, No. 6. Los Angeles, 1931. 3) W. B. Griffen, "Notes on Seri Indian Culture, Sonora, Mexico," *Latin American Monograph Series*, No. 10, Gainesville, 1959.

4. It will be noted that between subdivision 3 and 4 on Fig. 3 there is an unnumbered area, the status of which is uncertain.

5. Kroeber states that McGee's concept of Seri maternal lineages crystallized into totemic clans with matron rule seem a fantasy. In Kroeber's opinion, "The Seri may never have had sibs or clans; but the fact that they appear to lack them now is no positive evidence that they were without them three centuries ago. Shifts of residence, contraction of territory, shrinkage of numbers, amalgamation of distinct bands, may well have obliterated much of such social fabric as they once possessed."

Griffen discusses the nature of the former Seri bands and states, "they may have been patrilineal and exogamous. The criteria . . . that Julian Steward has exposited for the formation of exogamous, patrilineal bands . . . are and presumably would have been met formerly in the Seri habitat." Griffen lists other aspects of this type of band which are also verified to some extent by his data. From reading his material, it is obvious that he suspects the existence of clans at some earlier period. He emphasizes the need for further investigation.

6. G. P. Murdock, *Social Structure*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1949.

7. Marriages were usually contracted within the band.

8. As Kroeber points out, their memory likely covers only the latter part of the period of Spanish contacts.

9. The Seri recall nothing of Seri-Pima contacts and little of Seri-Apache relations.

10. The story is related that one day some Seri entered a cave where they found several Papago jugs filled with seeds. Being hungry, the people ate the seeds and left some arrows as token payment. The Seri say that the Papago apparently believed the arrows were intended as an insult. Fighting broke out soon afterward.

11. The Seri concept of the band annihilations is seen to be in contradiction to McGee's statement (p. 132): "Concordantly with their primary characteristic, the Seri have avoided ethnic and demotic union beyond the narrow limits of their own kindred; and even of these they seem to have cast out parts, annihilating the Guayma and Upanguayma, displacing and nearly destroying the Tepoka, and outlawing individuals and (apparently) small groups."